

1047. You think that these clever people of whom you speak would not be so likely to succeed in deceiving the runangas as they are in deceiving the Judges of the Courts?—Yes.

1048. *Mr. Mackay.*] In fact, that the runangas could settle these matters better than the Court?—Yes.

1049. *Mr. Rees.*] Have the Natives in this district any large tracts of land undivided, and with the title undecided?—Yes, several. There is one block, for instance, at Waiomio. Mr. Clendon recently, on behalf of the Government, asked them to have it surveyed with a view to prospecting for coal. They refused to allow it to be surveyed, but offered to allow it to be prospected. They say that if they permit it to be surveyed they will lose it. I think this is wrong, because the Natives in possession know that there are several other sub-tribes which also have a right to this land, and they refuse to have it surveyed simply in order to stop these people from coming in.

1050. There is a great part of the land in this northern district sold to the Government?—Yes. Formerly a lot of it went to the Government as a sort of gift or makepeace with the Government. My husband had a deal of land given by his tribe to Marsh Brown to give to the Government.

1051. And the Government have also purchased land?—Yes. They purchased a great deal. In fact, they said they would not take it for nothing, but preferred to pay something.

1052. Have they now anything left to represent the money which they derived from their sales of land—anything on which they spent it?—No, they spent it all on drink. They drank fearfully in those times.

1053. They have not purchased anything else with the proceeds of these land-sales—other land or stock, for instance?—No, except a flour-mill up at Taumerere, which they bought for £1,500. They have always asked such an enormous sum for leasing it that it has remained on their hands idle.

1054. Do you think the wiser plan of dealing with the Native lands would be not to sell them, but to lease them in order to get a revenue from them?—That would be a very good thing—to only lease, so that their land would not be taken from them. They have the idea that the Government wish to take their land from them. They say that by the Treaty of Waitangi they were to have the power of dealing with their lands, and that they have been done out of it.

1055. You say that if a plan were adopted by which their lands were leased for their own benefit that that would be a very wise plan?—Yes.

1056. And that the great evils of sales are that they make free with the proceeds, and thus render themselves a landless people?—Yes.

1057. Do you think, in relation to the leasing of their lands, that it would be wise to have Committees, formed of the leading people of the different tribes, to act with the Government Commissioners, so as not to have these multitudinous signatures to everything?—That would be a very good plan.

1058. It would save all these expenses of subdivisional surveys would it not?—Yes.

1059. Has the individualisation of title been attempted up here?—Yes; and it seems to fail.

1060. First of all, is individualisation of title according to Native custom?—No; the land was formerly held by the hapu. They would say, "Your hapu will have that portion to cultivate, and ours will have this other portion;" but these divisions would only be for the purposes of cultivations.

1061. Then, the individualisation of title is an entirely new thing among the Maoris?—Yes, altogether.

1062. It seems to be feared?—Yes. My own people tried it very hard under Graham Tawhai, at Hokianga, and there is a large block at Waima which they took and subdivided.

1063. Do you not think that the plan should be to lease alone?—Yes; but as regards individualisation, is it not better for me to have my own shanty, so to say, to myself? I have an interest in two blocks—one of 7,000 acres and one of 11,000 acres. I should like my portion cut out.

1064. *Mr. Mackay.*] Of course the subdivision of land like that would not be so expensive?—No.

1065. *Mr. Rees.*] In regard, then, to the sub-tribal and hapu boundaries, you think that the Natives themselves would be both competent and more successful in defining boundaries than the Native Land Court?—Yes.

1066. That they would not be deceived?—Yes; all the parties would speak out freely, and would obtain a better hearing. They would not either, be confused by cross-questioning.

1067. Do you think that, before the runanga, the people who make up clever stories would fear to do so there?—They would be more afraid of doing so there than before the Native Land Court. These are people who constantly attend the Courts and who know how to manage cases there, whereas those who have not acquired that knowledge are quite ignorant of the procedure of the Court, and will ask what they have to do in going before it. Perhaps, then, they will be led in the wrong way by these clever, designing people, and put on a wrong track altogether. I have thought of this matter for a long time, for, as I have said, I have sat in the Court and witnessed these things. I have seen Natives lose their land straight out in that way.

1068. People whom you knew to be entitled to the land according to Maori custom and usage?—Yes. There is the case of this Puhipuhi Block, for instance. It was only because the Government had advanced money on that land to certain people that the land actually passed to the people who received that money; and yet they had no right to it. It looked very like as if the Government favoured the people who had received the money.

1069. Do you think it would be a good thing to empower Maori Committees in the different districts to make reserves for the establishment of technical schools whereat the Native children could be taught farming and things of that sort?—Yes. I have a small school myself. The Maoris, however, want to be made to send their children regularly to school, and not be allowed to keep them at home just when they please. There is a great waste of public money in connection with