

1240. Then the moving spring among those Natives was that they might each secure a vote?—Yes. In the time of the Hall-Atkinson Government the Natives were deprived by legislation of their right to vote in elections unless they had individual titles to land, no matter if the tribal lands were worth thousands of pounds.

1241. *Mr. Mackay.*] That is, the right to vote in the election of European members?—Yes.

1242. *Mr. Rees.*] So they desired to obtain individual titles in order to get their names placed on the electoral roll?—That was the motive. But it was found to be expensive, and in fact could not be done. I contested the Bay of Islands seat at the last general election, and there were then no Natives on the roll; and at every place that I addressed a public meeting I made it one of my chief points that the Native lands ought to be dealt with by a Committee or a Commission, and that the Native Land Court ought to be done away with altogether. This idea took well with the Natives and also with the Europeans. I do not think that I gained any votes by it, but I pleased myself, for I felt convinced that it was the right thing. At any rate, it took well with my audiences. I laid down the plan of having an independent Commission to act with the Natives in valuing their properties and then giving them over to the Government, and nationalising the value so as to pay the Natives a fair rate of interest for all time, and when the Native race would be extinct the capitalised value would fall into the hands of the Crown. That plan pleased the Europeans; and the Natives were delighted with it, for they could see that it meant no more shooting, no more publichouse work, and no more litigation over their lands, and they would have little difficulty in allocating their hapu and individual shares of the annual payments. Besides all these evil results of the present system, the younger Natives, I am sorry to say, have become very expert in making up lies, and they go into Court and swear these lies, taking good care to keep away from the Courts their old men, because the old men are truthful. In making up this evidence, they post sentries outside the house or where they concoct the evidence, so that the others may not hear what they are saying, and in this way they swear like parrots in the Court.

1243. They deliberately concoct these lies, then, and keep the other people away from the Court so that their evidence may practically be given in secret?—Yes. I may say that I am very popular with the Natives up North, and I state these things because I wish them well. I have refused £600 a year from syndicates who have wished to take their lands from them. I have never bought land for anybody excepting the business I have done for myself, and even these transactions have never been perfected.

1244. As a matter of fact, is it not extremely difficult and next to impossible under the present law to complete Native titles?—It is. I have advanced a lot of money, and then have failed, and I would not attempt to do it again. I feel that it would not be worth the expense even when I had succeeded in perfecting the title.

1245. And you have already paid money for land that you have never acquired?—Yes; and I have been sued in the Courts for debts that I really could not pay.

1246. You have exhausted yourself of money in trying to complete the title to these Native lands upon which you have made advances?—Yes. That is not the only reason; it is one of them.

1247. Do you think it would be a good thing for the Maoris, while they still possess immense areas of land, to make large reserves for the education of their children—not the mere education they get at present, but a technical education obtained on large farms attached to the schools, where they would receive practical instruction in the management of sheep and cattle, be taught agriculture, carpentering, blacksmithing, and other useful trades?—I would not so tie them down by legislation that they themselves would have nothing to do with it. At all the different places where I addressed meetings during the election contest, I made it a point to suggest the amalgamation of the European and Native schools in the same district. At present an inspector comes down from Wellington to inspect Native schools, and an inspector comes from Auckland to inspect European schools—in many cases where the two sets of schools are not more than a mile apart—and in this way public money is simply wasted. The young Native learns like a parrot the meanings of English words at present; whereas, if the Native and European children attended the same schools, the Native children would be put on their mettle, and would emulate the European children in all their studies and in their games—playing cricket and football with them, and pursuing their studies side by side with them. They learn very quickly while they are young. This amalgamation of the Native and European schools would certainly be a saving of public money.

1248. You think, then, that if large reserves were made for educational purposes, the European children should be educated along with the Native children?—Certainly. Surely, if a team of Natives can go Home and play football with the first men in England, the outlying settlers ought not to object to sending the Native children to the European schools? The present system is wasteful. At Motukaraka, for instance, there are three schools within a few miles of each other. All the children who go to the Native school there are half-castes. What I am saying with respect to the schools is in the interest of the Natives; and I repeat that it is a waste of money to maintain a distinct system of education for Native children. There is an Inspector for Native schools who resides at Wellington, and four Inspectors of European schools have to be paid for in this district; and yet, perhaps the two sets of inspectors may at the same time be inspecting schools which are not a mile apart. At both Motukaraka and Waimamaku the Native and European schools are about a mile apart.

1249. *Mr. Mackay.*] The Inspectors of the European schools in this district, of course, serve under the Auckland Education Board, while the Native School Inspector is under the central department in Wellington?—Yes; separate pay and separate cheque for each. I will say moreover, that, although I am not favourable to the Boards, the system which they carry out has this advantage, that the teachers are classified. They have certificates of competency; while the teachers of Native schools are mostly the friends of people in office in Wellington, and they are appointed irrespective of the consideration whether they are capable or not.