evidence is rejected a rehearing will be applied for. My object, when I have appeared as counsel in the Native Land Court, has always been to state the case with brevity, to cut out that part of the case that does not seem to be salient, and confine my examination to the points which to me appear really material.

1598. As you would in an ordinary Court of law?—Yes, and this mode of procedure enables me to complete in an hour an examination which would occupy me days if I conducted it according to the usual Native method.

1599. Do you think that these lengthy proceedings, in the way they are conducted now, would be allowed in any ordinary English Court?—I am certain they would be stopped at once; but the example is hardly parallel.

1600. Have you had brought under your notice at all anything which would show that a practice has grown up of late years of Natives making up stories for the purpose of getting a title?—I have frequently come across that tendency on the part of Natives, and in some of these instances I have fortunately been able to spoil their story by quoting evidence which they had given in other cases that showed they were completely at fault. There is also a very grave fault in connection with subdivision cases that ought to be mentioned. For instance, if the title is alienable a solicitor in acting for a client often conducts the purchase of undivided shares. It becomes necessary afterwards to go to the Court and ask for a subdivision of these shares. The tendency of the Natives then is to prove that the vendors' interest is small, and therefore very great care should be taken to ascertain the true position of matters.

1601. Before purchasing?—Not so much that, but that the Judges should be fully alive to the fact that these Natives are bolstering up a story for a particular purpose.

1602. In relation to rehearings, do you consider that these rehearings take place more frequently than ought to be the case?—I consider that that is one of the great blots in the present system—that rehearings are granted without sufficient reason; and no one can ever feel safe in the issue of a title. To my mind, it really means that the Natives waste their substance in litigation, and that, as a consequence, the settlement of the country is absolutely retarded. It very often happens that the decision on the rehearings is only just varied enough from the original finding to make it appear worth while to have a rehearing, and in most cases there is no real ground for saying that the second decision is one whit more righteous than the first one was.

1603. Has it come within your experience that the Natives are uselessly detained at the Court, and that they are put to great inconvenience by reason of the sittings being held at long distances from their homes?—No; I cannot say that it has. My experience has chiefly been in connection with sittings at Hastings, where there are a great many kaingas, and they are quite comfortable.

1604. In regard to the subdivision of Native lands, can you give us any idea of the cost of subdividing rough land which is not of great value in itself, and when there are many owners? Of course surveys would be necessary. Can you give us an idea of the relative proportions of the cost and the value of the individual interest? Do you think there would be much left for the Maoris?—No, I do not. I think that any purchaser who gives a fair price for Native land ultimately has to give a most prohibitive price.

1605. That is owing to the expenses being so great?—Oh! they are enormous. To begin with, we will say that the Native Land Court, after all hearings and rehearings have been disposed of, issues an order for a certificate of title under the Land Transfer Act: there is even then too much delay before that is sent to the District Land Registrar to issue the title. It has taken, to my knowledge, over twelve months to do it in cases where I could not see any reason why it should not be done within a few weeks. It seems to me that all that is required to be done is to have a proper survey, approved by the Crown officers, and the orders made out and completed by the Judge.

1606. Then the surveyor has to be paid his fees, besides the fees of the Court?—Fees have to be paid in respect of the survey. The purchaser has to pay such price for the land as the Trust Commissioner may see to be fair. There is every precaution and safeguard given to the Natives in their dealings, and then the purchaser has to pay his solicitor, who really cannot charge his client what he would be entitled to charge him, because it would amount to too much. I mean to say that the attendances are so frequent, and the work to be done is so enormous, and the other fees are so large, that, if the client had to pay his solicitor the ordinary charges, I do not think that as a business transaction the thing could possibly stand it. Interpreters also have to be employed, because every deed has to be interpreted and properly understood by the Natives; a very large stamp duty has to be paid; and then, when we get as far as having the orders before the District Land Registrar, it becomes necessary for the purchaser or for the lessee, whoever he may be, to go back to the original title and against every man who was in the title and had died since; he has to secure transmission of the succession, pay all the fees, and register the trustee orders. In stating all this, I am simply putting cases that I have had experience of. This all shows that the machinery for acquiring land in small blocks—I am not speaking of very large blocks—is altogether too expensive and too cumbrous.

1607. And, even then, is it not the case that the title is liable to be attacked?—Yes; that is shown by the decisions given in cases in the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal—as, for instance, the case of Paraone *v.* Matthews——

1608. And Poaka *v.* Ward?—Yes. In these cases the title is liable to be attacked where there is really no fault to be attributed to the purchaser. It seems to me that where a certificate of title is issued under the Land Transfer Act, if the transaction on its merits is a fair one, the lessee or purchaser should be protected.

1609. Do you think it would be to the advantage of the public that all individual dealings in Native land should be stopped except where the land is held in severalty, and that titles should be given by some central Board, the Maoris first of all having their reserves taken out?—I rather doubt if it would be an advantage.