

1827. Do you think it would simplify that very much if the lessees paid their money into the Court and that it should be the duty of an officer of the Court to see to its distribution among the parties entitled to receive it?—It would. The lessees are frequently put to great inconvenience and trouble, because they do not know to whom to pay the money, and whose receipt they should get. If they could lodge the money with a responsible officer of the Court in their district, it would be a great convenience. Of course there would be a special fund for the purpose.

1828. You think that would give confidence to the Maoris?—It would be a greater convenience to the Europeans; it would be a convenience to both parties.

1829. Following on the same lines, do you think that, along with the other duties of the Judge of the Court, or Commissioner, or whatever officer may be appointed, there might be united the position of advisory Commissioner for the Natives in that district, so that the Judge, if he were chosen for the purpose, might not merely discharge judicial functions, but also functions of advice?—How do you mean?

1830. In the payment of moneys, consulting the Natives in the partition of their shares, and other things of that sort. You did at Waitotara what many Judges would hesitate to do. They would say, "We are not here to advise, but to judge." Do you not think that what you did there was of advantage to the Natives?—I thought so at the time.

1831. Have you had any reason to alter that opinion?—No. I knew it was a good thing, and I went straight ahead. That was my practice. We had no conductors of cases (*kaiwhakahaeres*); simply the Maoris themselves; no solicitors or agents. They did not know what to do; we told them what to do, and got them to put it into shape. This was at Waitotara. I have done it in other instances—at Wanganui, for instance. I only mention Waitotara as a striking proof of getting so much work done in a short time, and easily. I wanted to use my brains, and I did. I look upon it in this way: A Judge should act in his district as a sort of paternal guardian. That is the position I am always disposed to take up, and it has been accepted by the Maoris.

1832. Have you found it to be successful?—Perfectly so. I may say that the Maoris know me very well here, and have unbounded confidence in me. I never listen to a Native out of the Court. I will take what he has to say in Court only. They feel, therefore, that I am perfectly impartial, and they have perfect confidence in me.

1833. Do you think it would be a good thing, in view of a new law being passed whereby individual dealing would be stopped, that there should be a Board, partly appointed by the Government and partly elected by the Maoris of the North Island, for the purpose of giving titles—in fact, a sort of Waste Lands Board?—I think it would work very well. I suppose the Judge of the district would report to that Board.

1834. Yes, as to what titles required to be made, what lands were to be leased, and what arrangements were to be made in connection with them; and the central Board would then give statutory titles. Then, do you think it would be useful to add to the functions of the Board the power of doing what any body of owners would not do—that is to say, if they were recalcitrant, and would not act?—There should be power reserved for that purpose, to be used if necessary.

1835. I suppose you would say, not necessarily to interfere with the Native Committees, but to intervene if they did not do their duty?—Yes; it is a power that I should keep back, and not exercise, if possible.

1836. Only as a last resort?—Yes. I have always endeavoured to infuse into the Natives a real interest in their work; and to that I attribute a good deal of the success: that is to say, that they take a great deal of interest in their own work.

1837. We have heard a good deal from many sources about a practice having sprung up of late years of Maoris who really have no tangible claim to land making up a case?—We have always such cases. You have to sift the wheat from the chaff. The difficulty is to do that, because they tell such lies.

1838. Do they make up cases cleverly?—Oh! with wonderful cleverness.

1839. The Maoris themselves tell us that before a runanga of the people, or a joint committee of all the contesting parties, these things would not be said by the people?—Very probably. They often do that before the Court which they would not dream of doing amongst themselves, because they all know the history of these things so well. It would be useless for them to try and impose upon one another in that way. The history of the tribe is common history to them, and is known to every one of them. And I would add this: that if a Judge is confined to his own district he becomes familiar with the history of the people and their lands, and the consequence is that they would not attempt to impose upon him as they attempt to impose upon a stranger.

1840. Have you come across any Natives who not merely fabricated oral evidence, but evidence as to wills or deeds?—Yes; successions. Since I came to Waipa I have seen more wills put before the Court than I ever did before, and several of them were said to be forgeries. Whether they are such has not yet been determined. These are wills that were, perhaps, written out by the husband of the woman in whose favour they are made, and signed by the deceased making his mark. This may be a fabrication. How can we tell, nobody being present but the husband, his wife, who is benefiting by the transaction, and the dying man? All these wills have to be viewed with a great deal of suspicion.

1841. What is the effect as regards the expense and trouble of the enforced definition of interests recently?—Very great indeed. The Maoris have to pay altogether too much in taking a particular matter before the Court, for, in addition to their other expenses, there are the fees of the *kaiwhakahaeres* or conductors. First of all, there is the cost of the surveys. Of course these are necessary. Then there is the preliminary cost of the hearing; and after that there is the division of the land; and, finally, the determination of the individual interests. Every motion is a matter of expense and time. It costs both the Government and the Maoris too much.

1842. What has been the operation of the laws passed during the last eight or ten years relat-