

good of a tribunal taking evidence which the Judge is conscious may be false? It is a pure waste of time. I do not think that more than one Native in a hundred who are sworn in Court to give true testimony are bound by any conscientious feeling of the oath they take. It is a very serious thing to say, but that is my decided opinion. Anybody who knows anything about the Native Land Court procedure, I think, would quite indorse what I say. Of course you come across exceptional cases, where the people are really conscientious. I do not mean those cases.

1867. You speak of the ordinary cases?—Yes; of the ordinary Maori who comes into Court. If the Court is to continue, the conductors and solicitors may be, and often are, of use to it, although their powers are liable to be abused. In the first place the Court ought to be satisfied that the conductors are receiving a fixed fee for the case, and not merely so much per day. The Judge ought to be quite strict in seeing that the proceedings were not being delayed, but that every effort was being made to advance the interests of all concerned. These conductors do a lot of useful work in preparing cases for the Court. It would be advisable, for the saving of time and for securing the directness of the evidence, to have a brief statement of the case and of the evidence to be adduced supplied to the Court; but it should be prepared beforehand, along with the answer of the other side. It would be, in other words, a filing of the pleadings. That being done, then leave it to the Court to find out the facts by its own examination of the witnesses.

DANEVIRKE, 7TH MAY, 1891.

Mr. JAMES ALLARDICE examined.

1868. *Mr. Rees.*] You are a hotelkeeper residing in Danevirke?—Yes.

1869. How long have you been living in Danevirke?—I have been here eighteen years.

1870. Is there any large quantity of land owned by Maoris around Danevirke?—Yes; all round it: in fact, Danevirke is surrounded by Maori lands.

1871. In what condition is this Maori land? Is it leased by the Maoris to Europeans?—A good portion of it is leased to Europeans.

1872. The Tamaki Block is leased, is it not?—That is only for the timber rights. Then, there are the Teratu, Waikopiro, and other blocks.

1873. Now, take the block called Mangatara: that is in possession of the Bank of New Zealand Assets Company as a sheep-run, is it not?—Yes.

1874. If the Maori lands were utilised—cut up and leased in small blocks—would it be of advantage to the district?—Yes; there are dozens of families that would take up land if they could get it.

1875. If they could get it on reasonable terms and in convenient areas?—Yes; decent-sized farms, not 40-acre ones.

1876. Are there any men leaving the district through inability to get land?—Yes; a great many settlers' sons.

1877. Then, you say that Danevirke is surrounded by Maori lands? Do you literally mean that for some extent around Danevirke the lands are Maori lands? You really think that for some distance round the town all the land is in the hands of the Maoris?—It is all Maori land round Danevirke; only the Government has the right to get it.

1878. During the last eighteen years I suppose you have seen a good deal of land taken up by Europeans in the whole district?—Yes.

1879. How was it taken up, in large or small areas?—Much of it was taken up before my time.

1880. Was it possible for persons to get land in small blocks from the Natives?—Not at that time.

1881. I suppose the people had to go to Napier and employ agents?—Yes; and the Government would not cut it up or assist them in getting it. There is the Oringi Block. I believe the Natives are getting it back now, and Tahoraite too.

1882. Then, in your opinion, it would be of considerable benefit to this district if the Maoris had some small benefit in cutting up those lands, like Crown lands are cut up, and sold or leased to Europeans on reasonable terms?—Yes; or if they would sell to the Government; in fact, do anything with it, so that we could get a good title.

1883. Do you suppose that the land being in this condition, and not available for settlement, is having the effect of keeping Danevirke back?—Undoubtedly. There are thousands of acres of land here that could be settled upon, and the only place that is settled is Umutaoroa, a block of 5,000 acres. As soon as it was thrown open every inch of it was taken up by two associations. It was taken up I think, at about £1 5s. an acre, on deferred payments.

1884. *Mr. Carroll.*] Into what size of areas do you think it would be well to cut up this land?—From 100 to 300 acres, according to the character of the land. I should say that, in so far as the Tamaki Block is concerned, the areas should be from 100 to 300 acres. It is good land, and flat.

1885. What would the settlers be willing to give for small farms of that size?—£1 10s. an acre, while land close to the town would bring £5 an acre if it were put up to auction. You will see for yourselves that there is no land close to the town except Native land.

1886. Are there no Crown lands available here?—Not till you get to Weaver, twenty-three or twenty-four miles away, and I think it is nearly all taken up. Then, there are shocking roads. The Government ought really to do something to the roads. They sell the land dearly enough, and yet the road is left just as it used to be long ago.

1887. Do you think that, if special farming settlements were established here and there for the Natives, it would be a good thing?—They have got good farms in the country now.

1888. But, if they were encouraged to go in for it systematically?—I believe it would be a good thing. There would have to be some provision made for them.