1968. Within the limits of its jurisdiction it should be final?—Yes. Apart from my opinion as to the desirability of speedy justice, I should say that the absence of a possible tribunal influences my answer to that.

1969. How do you mean?—The only Court there could be an appeal to would be the Supreme Court; and the Supreme Court generally cannot reach the merits of Native-land disputes—that is, the merits of Maori title. It has no means of reaching the true merits of these disputes. That influences me in my answer.

1970. As a matter of fact, is it not generally considered among the profession that the decisions of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal are in all cases open to very grave objection upon these subjects—disputes rather than objections?—In what way?

1971. As to the decisions they have given on the questions arising out of these complicated subjects?—I do not quite understand you. Of course there is always one person or set of persons dissatisfied with every decision; but you do not mean that, I presume?

1972. No. Does not the profession think the statutes in reference to these matters are so difficult to understand or to construe that scarcely any judgment is likely to be absolutely correct in itself?—I cannot say that I have ever thought that. I may say that, as a rule, in most cases I have been satisfied so far; I have thought the judgment as a matter of law, was right, or probably right, in most cases—I do not say in all cases. When the case has been threshed out I have generally felt I was going to win or to lose, as the case might be, before the judgment was actually given. And the result has generally been in accordance with my anticipation; not according to my anticipation before I went into the Court, but after the argument has been concluded.

1973. In many dealings between Natives and Europeans—which dealings have been declared either inoperative or illegal by Courts afterwards, do you think that the Europeans were justified in entering into those dealings, believing they were within the law, as in the case of Poaka *v.* Ward, for instance, and also the case of Matthews *v.* Brown?—Well, I have never considered that. These two cases I had nothing to do with beyond editing the reports for the New Zealand Law Reports, and I cannot remember that I formed any opinion as to the merits of those cases.

1974. What is your opinion, as a conveyancer, in the matters that professionally come before you, as to the individual dealings of Natives in respect of land—the signing of individual Natives for their land held in common?—Well, my opinion is this: that the Natives held their land by no tenure which we can describe in European language, nor did they hold it by any tenure which they could have described themselves. I believe their idea was not the ownership of the land, but a right to the products of the land. Well, we have upset that entirely. New notions have sprung up among the Maoris, due to our legislation, the desire of Europeans to acquire land, and the position of the Natives, who have transmuted their original Native title to the European title, or a title known to the English law. I take it, nothing you could do would enable them to hold their land as they did before Europeans arrived. You have made a great transformation, and I think, if you are going to make a transformation at all, the more complete it is the better. In my opinion, a good deal of the trouble has been caused by attempting to make an incomplete transformation—that is, giving a title known to Europeans, and yet without the incidents to that title.

1975. Attempting, in fact, to graft a fixed individual ownership, according to our system, upon the tribal system of the Natives?—Yes.

1976. And halting half-way?—It is halting half-way. I do not think it is wrong. I think there is a reason for it, and a meritorious one. It is to secure to the Natives their land. But the same end might be better secured in another way.

1977. Do you think, if some method were adopted of enabling the Natives, in cases where there are large blocks of land with large numbers of owners, to deal collectively, like the shareholders of a joint-stock company or the members of a body corporate, through themselves and an officer appointed by the Government, it would work satisfactorily?—Well, I do not know. My opinion has always been that it would not work. The persons appointed by the Natives would be Natives ignorant of the European modes of dealing in most cases, not in all; and in some cases they would not act up to that standard of honesty and fair dealing that we look to trustees for. They would be trustees, and dealing as such without a sense of the responsibility of trustees. That is the principal fault I find with the suggestion. The same fault I find with the grants issued, under the Act of 1866, to ten people out of the owners in each block. I have always thought this created shocking injustice.

1978. Supposing a Board were created like the Waste Lands Board, partly appointed by the Government and partly elected by the Natives?—For dealing with the land?

1979. Yes; subject to the directions of the owners. What do you think of such a plan as that?—I have never thought of that. I should like to see that plan elaborated before expressing an opinion upon it. That is a sort of enlargement of the Native Committees?

1980. Yes; adding, of course, the European element, appointed by the Government and responsible to Parliament?—They would have to deal, perhaps, with blocks that they knew nothing about.

1981. They would have to get the instructions of the people in the district, and work with them, under regulations, of course, for the disposal of the lands?—I prefer not to express an opinion on that until I see the thing elaborated. It has a very large possibility, no doubt, and it would require very careful treatment.

1982. Do you think it would be a good thing to take from the ordinary Courts, supposing such a tribunal as that which was hinted at before were created, all jurisdiction in regard to these past Native-land troubles, and devolve it upon the new tribunal?—No, I do not. I am not disposed to think it would be a good thing.

1983. You would leave open the resort to the superior Courts of law, or to such a Court as we have spoken of before?—That is what I mean.

1984. But I say that, assuming this tribunal were created, you would devolve upon it the jurisdiction now exercised by the ordinary Courts?—Oh, yes! I thought you were referring to the Board you spoke of.