

And yet both she and they are absolutely excluded, although she was living on the land at the time of the sitting of the Court.

2273. Do you not think it would be a good thing that any central Native Board to be created should have the power, on evidence, to rectify anything of this sort?—It depends a great deal on the *personnel* of the Board. If they are vested with large powers they should be men of large experience.

2274. Do you not think it advisable to have that Board a mixture of Maoris and Europeans—a Board partly appointed by the Government and partly elective by the Maoris—and accountable both to Parliament and the Maoris?—I see no objection to the Board being accountable to Parliament, but it should be entirely free from the control of the Government. The Government should not have any power of appointment.

2275. You think that the Board ought to be independent in that sense, even if there be any European element; that its success largely depends on the persons who are managing; and that it should have vested in it plenary powers for the remedying of any abuses such as those you are now bringing under our notice?—Just so. Many of these disputes, if dealt with by the Board amongst the Maoris themselves, would, in my opinion, be speedily and satisfactorily settled.

2276. Questions in which the Maoris themselves are interested?—Yes. Many of the Maoris are ashamed to look at one another in the Court over this very same transaction of Ngarara of which I have just spoken.

WELLINGTON, 15TH MAY, 1891.

NGARANGI KATITIA (GEORGE BROUGHTON) examined.

2277. *Mr. Carroll.*] Are you one of the owners in the confirmed leases on the west coast of this Island?—Yes. I am one of the owners in those lands which were originally leased by the Maoris themselves to Europeans, and which leases were afterwards confirmed under statute. Those are not the lands originally leased by the Public Trustee.

2278. Did they not form the subject of several petitions to Parliament in which the Natives prayed for redress?—Yes: we commenced petitioning Parliament about these lands in 1887, and we continued petitioning until June of the year that has just passed away.

2279. Can you state shortly the grievances the Natives suffer from in connection with these lands?—Yes. The great evil with which the people are afflicted I shall instance by mentioning one particular case. The name of the person concerned is Marino. I produce his grant to a block of land containing in all 303 acres. [Crown grant produced.] It was granted to myself and sixteen others. The whole of this land was included in a lease. No portion of it was left out. Marino is the grantee of this land. He is also the grantee in another block called Putahi, the whole of which was also leased. Haututu is another block of land of which this same person is grantee, and the whole of it likewise has been leased. Those are the only lands in which Marino holds any interest. He has absolutely no land outside of those blocks for his own occupation. There is another of the grantees—a woman named Mata Riri—who is in the same position with regard to her land. The only land in which she has any interest is in this block. It is all leased. Mr. Rennell has given her 5 acres in the Hawera district to live upon. That is not sufficient for her wants.

2280. Are there many of the Natives in the same position as those you have mentioned?—Yes, there is a great number.

2281. What do they do when they have no lands, apart from those which are leased, to occupy and live upon?—They simply have to depend upon the kindness of their friends, and they go here and there, sometimes depending upon Europeans for work. These leases were granted by the Natives to Europeans in 1877, and confirmed by Sir William Fox and Sir Dillon Bell when they were sitting as Commissioners on the West Coast in 1880; but the Commissioners did not go so far as to reserve from these leases a sufficiency of land for the occupation of all the owners. I can mention about a dozen Natives who are landless in this way, their lands being leased, and none left upon which they can squat at the present time. They have to go about among the Europeans looking for work, and squatting upon places parcelled off for other persons.

2282. At the time that these lands were leased by the Natives to the Europeans were there any stipulations as to the improvements?—No, there was no provision that the European was to be accounted to for his improvements; but the provision was the other way—that the improvements which were made were to go to the Maoris at the end of the term for which the land was leased. It was on that account that the consideration accepted by the Maoris and offered by the Europeans was made small. For the first five years of the lease the rent was to be small in consequence, and after the first five years the rent was to be increased; but the reason why it was to be low for the first five years was because the Natives were to get the improvements at the end of the lease. But after these contracts were made the law intervened and robbed us of our rights. That is the reason also why we are in such great trouble, and why we have petitioned Parliament repeatedly to grant us redress. [Lease produced.] The provisions of this lease show that improvements are to be made upon the land, and are to be left upon it at the expiration of the lease without payment to the lessee. Then the Commissioners came after these leases were made, and confirmed these leases as they stood. Then, subsequently, Parliament passed a law robbing us of those rights, and transferring the improvements to which we were entitled to the European lessees, besides giving them a renewal of the lease for an extended term of thirty years at reduced rentals. I would add this: that myself and people never took up arms against the Queen. My father, Mr. Broughton, was killed by the Hauhaus while he was performing duty under the Government as interpreter attached to the forces, and his name may be seen inscribed on a monument erected at Wanganui. I have repeatedly applied to the Public Trustee to exclude from his administration these lands; but he would not agree to it. Yet the Commissioners—Sir William Fox and Sir Dillon Bell—declared that 50 acres would be excluded from the operation of the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act for