

9. For how many years?—I think it is for twenty-one years. I do not know whether the old lease has been renewed or a new lease made. For my part of the land the new lease is not completed yet—only an agreement to lease.

10. For how many years?—Twenty-one years.

11. *Mr. Wi Pere.*] When did you and the other Natives cease to live on the island?—My people or my mother's people about the year 1850—it was leased then to Mr. Brown—those living to the south of my family's portion left still later.

12. But all your lands are under lease?—Yes.

13. And you are now desirous that your lands should not pass to the Crown?—Well, speaking personally, if I had no children I should not object; but realising the position as we do—that we have no other land to leave for the support of our descendants—then we do not want to part with the last possession that we have got.

14. Supposing that the Government was to see its way to give you in exchange for this, better land, and more land, what would you have to say then?—Well, where would it be? If it was proposed to give land about Levin, or Otaki, or Shannon, or that direction, personally I should agree, so far as my own interests are concerned, but I have no right to agree on behalf of other people.

15. Would you be prepared to accept money compensation?—Well, money I would not be able to accept, for the reason that I have already explained—that money has a faculty of melting away in various directions.

16. *Mr. Kaihau.*] Then, as a matter of fact, the whole of the island is under lease—there is not a single acre of what is owned by the Natives that is not under lease? No; the whole of the island, generally speaking, is under lease. I am not in a position to speak as regards the share of others, but as far as my own is concerned there is only a very small portion that is left out of the lease for occupational purposes when we desire to go backwards and forwards to the island. The land that was originally sold by Te Rauparaha to the European Brown is now the property of his descendants.

17. And have you no land at all in the South Island? I know when the Ngatitooa sold their lands in the South Island, as I have described, that certain reserves were made, but those reserves have disappeared. I do not know where they have gone to, and our present intention is that our descendants should look forward some day to re-entering upon possession or occupation of this island.

18. Therefore you oppose this Bill that proposes to take over the island? Yes; we would suffer if we were to agree to the Bill.

19. *Mr. Monk.*] Supposing that the Government, as a matter of policy, felt themselves compelled to take this island, would the Natives prefer to have an annuity in perpetuity rather than the payment of a lump sum?—Well, that is much the same as leasing. Of course, that might be satisfactory to us in the present generation; but what about our descendants; where is there any land for them if we were to do this?

20. Your descendants could save out of their annuity and purchase land for themselves, but they could never become poor or paupers?—What would be the amount per year?

21. I am not saying anything about that, but merely wishing to place the principle before you?—Of course, I have put my view of the case before the Committee, as we desire to see things arranged; but I realise that if the Government feel compelled to take this island, we can do nothing but suffer it; we cannot hope to successfully contend against them.

22. If taken, it will not be for a private purpose but rather for a sentimental one, to preserve the Native birds and animals; in fact, to be retained in its original condition as a memorial of the history of Te Rauparaha and the Ngatitooa?—Yes; it is to preserve the birds, &c. Well, I think that the welfare and preservation of human beings should take precedence of birds.

23. I quite agree with you; but both may be preserved?—During the past fifty years the Maoris have been in receipt of moneys from various sources; but, in spite of this, they have been steadily and gradually decreasing.

24. *Mr. Hunter.*] I would like to ask what Natives of those interested in Kapiti are represented here?—Every one is here, so far as I know, except Wi Parata.

25. Can you tell the Committee whether the whole of the Natives are opposed to this Bill?—We have expressed our views in the petition now before the Committee; and all are here in support of those views. We all object to the Bill.

27. *Hon. J. Carroll.*] Supposing Parliament insists on passing this Bill, what terms would you be inclined to favour in the way of compensation to the Natives, whether in the shape of land; or that the purchase-money should be funded for them, and that they should receive an annuity year by year for ever?—Well, that is a question I do not feel in a position to answer in an off-hand manner.

27. What guarantee is there, supposing this Bill does not pass, that the Native owners will not sell to the Government in the ordinary way?—Well, if each man voluntarily sells his own share or interest in the land no one can be blamed for that except himself, and no trouble will result.

28. That is open to them, of course, you are aware?—Yes.

29. You say in your petition that you look upon this land as your "mother's milk." You also state that you intend, or that the Natives are inclined, to go back and settle on that land. Then you tell us that you have already contracted new leases for long terms?—Yes, that is so; but the Committee will, no doubt, recognise that we have in view the interests of our successors—those who will succeed to our interests after us. We are not speaking on behalf of ourselves personally.

30. And, so far as you are concerned at the present time, you are quite content to lease the block instead of reoccupying it?—It is our regular practice to go there at certain times, and Ropata, and others who have not leased, live there. I should have stated that before.