

31. But yourself and some others have given new leases?—Yes, I have given an agreement to lease. It is not that we of the old generation wish to obtain the island for ourselves, it is for our children who come after us, all the other lands having been got rid of.

32. *Mr. Heke.*] What division of Kapiti do you represent?—No. 3.

33. How many acres?—About 375 acres.

34. What is the number of owners of that division?—There are ten of us, six out of the ten being my own family.

35. And, as far as you know, the whole of the ten object to the Bill?—Yes.

36. Can you tell us what rents you are getting?—We are not getting much for the 375 acres—only £15 a year. It was leased fifteen years ago to Mr. Field.

37. What is your knowledge in respect to the value of money to the Maoris?—When I am asked my opinion as to that, I may say that, in my opinion, land is a more valuable possession to them than money ever can be.

38. Have you any knowledge at all of the value of money, or the use of money by putting it out for investment purposes?—It depends on how much money you have got.

39. Say, if you get a money payment for your 375 acres, have you any knowledge of what that would bring in in interest?—Well, of course, that would not support my people as the land would.

40. Why?—Because they can go there and live upon it. It has the natural advantages of food, fish, birds, and everything they require.

41. And as to money itself—have you any knowledge as to what interest you can get on investing it—does interest rise or fall or what?—Well, it is now about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 5 per cent. I myself could of course manage; but I could not say for those that come after me. The land will be better for them; because if they had the money—we all know how we waste money, a great many of us, and how it diminishes.

42. And one of your strong points is that, after you are dead, your descendants would go on this land and live there and make use of it as you are now?—Yes. I think the Native race will want a few more islands before long if they go on selling as they are doing.

43. *The Chairman.*] Do you know if any shares in the island have already been sold?—I believe one or two have been mortgaged, and I think 10 or 12 acres have been sold to private people.

44. Do you know the total amount of rent derived from the lands leased?—We summed it up just now at over £200, at 1s. an acre; but it is worth more than that.

45. But you do not know the actual amount of the rent?—Well, it is something under £500.

Mr. Field: I should say that it is from £250 to £300.

46. *The Chairman.*] Have any of your people sold out their interests—parted with their freehold altogether?—Yes, a few acres have been sold; one small piece of about 12 acres.

47. Has there been any land sold recently?—I do not think so.

48. When was this 12 acres sold?—I think a couple or three years ago.

49. You say that some of the Natives live on the island?—They are just going back to it—the owners of Maraetakaroro—about 700 acres. It had been leased, but they are now going back to it.

50. *Mr. Heke.*] Do you know who they are?—Yes; Ropatas, the two brothers who are present here.

51. But they have not been living on it before this?—Yes, they have been there before, and their father was. Not permanently, but off and on. I think Mr. Field leased their part; but the lease has run out, and they are going back to live upon it.

TATANA WHATAUPOKO examined.

52. *The Chairman.*] The Committee would like you to state as concisely as possible if you can supplement what the previous witness has said without going over the same ground again: this will save time very much?—I shall have to go over some of the ground again, as part of what he said does not entirely express the wishes of all of us. Our desire is, first, to oppose this Bill, and our reason for doing so is that we have no desire to sell the land whatsoever. The Committee may know that in the year 1846 the Ngatitōa began to sell their lands—this island they did not desire to sell. The portion that has been acquired by Brown was paid for by that European in blankets, rum, tobacco, &c. In the year 1847 this pakeha Brown was taken by Tē Rangiata and driven away, and all his property confiscated, because they were not willing that the land should pass. From that time down to the present the land has remained in our possession, and we draw what the land produces—the rent money is received by us. Now, if we part with the land on the conditions laid down by this Bill we will very shortly cease to derive any benefit whatsoever from it. I do not know that I need say any more but to emphasize that I and the others with me—all of us here—will not, under any consideration, agree to sell this land. We will not do it.

53. *Hon. J. Carroll.*] Supposing that the Government took this land, and paid full compensation for it, but, instead of paying over the consideration-money to spend as they like, it was funded for the benefit of the Natives, and if they got an annuity equal to the rents they are now receiving as long as any of them or their descendants live, and at the same time some of them were to have an interest in the land in the way of trusteeship for the purposes named in the Bill, how would you consider that?—I do not know how to reply to any such proposal as that. I stick to what I first said—that I oppose the Bill and will continue to oppose it.

54. Then, how would you consider this proposal: Supposing the Government were to make an exchange—to give the Natives other lands suitable for their purposes and equal in value to this?—I cannot give a direct reply to such a question as that, because we have not as yet had any proposal made to us. We have not considered the matter and resolved upon a reply to which we can all agree.