

inefficiently—what was the real foundation for justifying the passage I referred to. I shall be done in about two minutes. My object was to explain that you are dealing with extraordinarily intricate matters, and it is of the first importance that you should commence by trying to understand them in some clear light. I was merely wanting to make it clear that you cannot touch any Native-land transactions without opening up the widest possible field of inquiry as to where justice is involved and as to where equity comes in; and I wanted to make it clear, in the performance of what I thought to be my duty, that the statement of the Hon. Mr. Carroll is of the gravest possible importance to this Committee, and that a right understanding of the questions involved by that statement is a condition precedent to coming to a decision as to the advisability or inadvisability of that Bill; and if when I take the opportunity of explaining what are the conditions involved in the alteration of the law I am exceeding my duties on the Committee, then I am useless on it.

*Mr. Monk*: My own impression is for us to have the evidence brought before the Committee of both sides of the question and the evidence of the Natives, and to proceed by the examination of witnesses to substantiate or otherwise the facts now placed before us by Mr. Carroll's statement.

*The Chairman*: I think the Committee will be grateful for the statement which Mr. Carroll made as an explanation of the case. Then comes the question of whether we should invite evidence before us showing the rights of the Natives, as the Hon. Dr. Grace has suggested, from the legal point of view, and the way in which the proposed legislation will effect its purpose. It appears to me that these are the points which this Committee have to inquire into; and if the Hon. Mr. Carroll can suggest to us the names of any witnesses skilled in Native-land law and in Native-land transactions, so that the Committee might have a clear view of those points to which I have already referred, it would be in the direction in which the Committee, in my opinion, should go. I do not know whether this opinion will be shared by the other members of the Committee.

*Hon. T. Kelly*: It is the very thing we want to start on. (To the Hon. Mr. Carroll) Which officer do you suggest?

*Hon. J. Carroll*: I would not suggest any particular one; but I quite agree that the most essential point to be understood by the Committee before working out any conclusion is a knowledge of the legal position of the case—the legal position as it was before 1896, and the legal position as it is now.

*Mr. Monk*: We get that more clearly by reading the Acts. What I want to be satisfied on is whether the allegations made against Mr. Pharazyn, for instance, are right, whether the allegations with regard to Europeans having improperly dealt with Piripiri are correct, and for the Judge also to explain to us why there should be a validation of the act of eight when they seemingly should have had the sanction of the ten trustees, for, there being only eight, on the face of it one may suspect the transaction is improper. May I ask Mr. Carroll whether the witnesses who would be able to help us in relation to section 13 of "The Native Land Laws Amendment Act, 1895," and section 55 of "The Native Land Court Act, 1894," would be the same men who would be able to assist us with regard to the other portion of the Bill?

*Hon. J. Carroll*: No; in the case of the Piripiri Block, that is affected by section 2 of the present Bill, I would propose to submit the name of Mr. Sheridan, who is the Chief Land Purchase Officer of the Government, to give evidence before the Committee. He is the official head of that department, who purchased that land from the Natives, and he could show all the evidence of the legal position of the matter. I do not think we should require any information outside what Mr. Sheridan could tell us. In respect to Mr. Pharazyn's matter, the papers pretty well disclose the position, with the formal statements made by the Natives as per schedule, showing the rents to come to each person, the indebtedness of each person, &c.; and you will see the letter from the solicitor of Mr. Pharazyn calling upon the Natives to execute the mortgage.

*Hon. J. Rigg*: I would like to ask if the Natives received the respective amount of the indebtedness in cash.

*The Chairman*: That we could get.

*Hon. J. Rigg*: Then, I would ask that evidence be obtained on that point, and also to assure us that they received a fair rental of the land.

*The Chairman*: Shall we decide first whether we shall take these clauses seriatim? Because, if so, we should proceed by summoning Mr. Sheridan to appear before us.

*Hon. J. Carroll*: If you take section 2 first, then Mr. Sheridan will be the witness.

*The Chairman*: If that course is decided on, then will Mr. Rigg suggest who else can be summoned?

*Hon. T. Kelly*: We want evidence as to the legal position.

*The Chairman*: I understand that the Committee desire me to summon Mr. Sheridan.

*Hon. J. Rigg*: I am not in a position to submit names, because I know no more about the case than what we have heard to-day. But if you agree to the motion that evidence be taken on these two points—as to the rental value of the land, and as to the amount received by the Natives and of what it consisted—if you will take evidence on these points I will endeavour to get names from some of the Maoris and submit them at the next meeting of the Committee.

*Mr. Monk*: Further, I would like to know what inducements were offered to the Natives in getting this money, because it has been suggested that pressure was put on the Natives to inveigle them into a position in which they would have to lose their lands. I should like to have the fullest information on that point as well.

*Hon. J. Carroll*: I will suggest names.

*Mr. Monk*: I should like evidence furnished before us as to the quality and value of the land.

*The Chairman*: That would be included in the question as to whether a fair rent was obtained.

*Hon. J. Carroll*: We can get the land-tax value; I can submit that.

At this stage the Committee adjourned till Monday, the 22nd instant.