

know from my own experience that lands have been dealt with by our own Ngatimaniapoto Council and very little expenses have been incurred. I am sure that if the people were more in favour of the Council, and were handing over their lands freely to it, the cost of administration would be very much less. We have three townships—Otorohanga, Te Kuiti, and Taumarunui—and all that we deduct for the cost of administration is 5 per cent., and surveys and so on of the sections, and we spread the payment over a period of ten years, so that they only have to pay a tenth of the total cost in any one year; and I think that shows that the Council does not want to grab all the money the first year—they are quite willing to spread out the cost of these things over a term of years.

30. The reason that I persist in asking this question is that perhaps you are aware that the Native Land Court uses up a good deal of the colony's money—it costs the country at least £14,000 a year, or more?—Well, I know you can look at the votes during past years, and you will see the Native Land Court votes totalling £19,000, £20,000, and £21,000 per year.

31. You asked yesterday that the Crown should find the money to pay the cost of the administration of the Council?—Yes; I said 5 per cent. should be borne by the land, and all expenses above that should be borne by the State. I look upon it that it would be a benefit both to the colony and the Maoris.

32. Now, do you not think that the fact of having the Native Land Court and the Council running at the same time looks like burning the candle at both ends—do you not think you should abolish one of these tribunals and let the other do all the work?—That may be quite right, but then we have got the Government over us to consider all those points. The Parliament votes the money for this purpose, and I cannot take it upon myself to tell the Parliament what they ought to do in matters of this kind. All I have to do is, as far as I can, to obtain a system of things which will work for the benefit of the Maori people.

33. Well, I am asking you this question because we want to have a plain statement laid before the members of this Committee as to what are the desires of the Maori people, who say that they wish that legislation affecting the Maori people should be made satisfactory for them?—Yes.

34. If the Government do not bring down legislation, or if they do not give us any amendment of the Council's Act, what do you think about this Council—will it have anything to do?—Of course, if we are not going to get it, then there will be no Act, and how is it to work? What I hope is that the Government will give us what we ask for. If they do not, they do not, and there is an end of it; if they do, they do, and that is the difference.

35. Well, you mean to say that if things remain as they are the lands will not be handed over to the Council?—I am not going to say anything in the nature of a threat, because I do not want to threaten the Parliament—I do not want to frighten them. I am asking for certain things. I say, consider the things I have asked for, and if you find them correct, give me what I ask.

36. You say that the Crown must pay the surveys of the Native lands?—I said that the colony should bear the cost of surveying, and so on. I do not say that the Native land should not bear a proportion of the cost of administration in a proper way; it certainly should bear a proportion, but the Crown should bear the cost of surveying, and so on. The Act of 1900 says that the Maori lands are to bear all the expense, but I say that it would be to the benefit not only of the Maoris, but of the colony generally, if the Crown did pay the cost.

37. Now, do you not think that if the restrictions were removed from all Maori lands, apart from the papakaingas, and if they were to be given power to sell, mortgage, or alienate them; do you not think that, after having been given these powers, they should bear the cost of administration of these lands in that direction?—Apparently you do not understand what I have said. I said that the cost of administration should be borne by the colony, and when the lands were administered then it could be fixed what proportion is to be deducted to make good the amount so expended in administration—that is, what the Maoris could pay. If you are going to call upon the Maoris to pay the cost of administration and they have not got any money, what are they going to pay it with? The Maoris, as you know, cannot find money to do these things. I say that, even if the colony does pay the cost of surveying, the Maoris will never pay it all off—the revenues of their lands are devoted to other things. That is why I say that the Board of Administration or Council should be a separate institution from any other thing.

38. *Mr. Vile.*] You say you represent the petitioners; the petition has about 276 Native signatures: do you represent the respective hapus of the Natives in the King-country?—Yes; there are a number of us representing all the people in that district here present.

39. Did you hold any meetings before coming here to discuss this petition in a general way throughout the King-country?—There were two large and important meetings convened and held in connection with this matter by us—one was in April and the other in May last—and all the matters contained in our petition are the result of what took place at those meetings. If you will look at the petition you will see it is printed, and, the district being a scattered one, it was impossible to take the one copy of the original petition round to every one to get it signed, so we had a number of copies printed and sent round each separate place for signature, so it is really all one petition.

40. Can you give me an idea of the number of Natives you represent?—There would be over two thousand people whom I represent.

41. Two thousand out of about forty thousand in the colony?—That is merely a guess; there may be a great many more than that. I thought it would be a good idea before I came here to ascertain the exact number of people in the district, but it was too great an undertaking. I wanted to get a plan prepared and the number of people ascertained, but I found it would take such a long time that I could not do it.

42. I think you stated yesterday the number of acres which you represent: can you now give the total area of Native land?—I think I am right in saying that there is still remaining of Maori-owned land in our own district at least two million acres. There is more than that.