

■ already been stated by the Public Trustee, that their rents have barely averaged 3 per cent. on the capital value in the past, and their only chance of recouping themselves for this loss would be by getting the value of the area there is in the Greymouth Reserve at the present time, which they think should bring them in 5 per cent. on the capital value, rather than trusting to investments which may or may not produce 4 per cent. in the future, and which would result undoubtedly in the loss of the unearned increment of the properties that they have invested in in Greymouth. They desire the reserves to remain as they are. With reference to themselves, this money, although going to one or two families—four families, I think, on the Arahura side—really keeps a large number of their descendants. Many of them have families, and it has been found that in the past the income has not been sufficient to keep them. All their money is really expended on food and clothing, and in practice it has been found that the income is not sufficient to pay their debts. They feel that the Greymouth land is likely in the future to return them a certain sure income of over 4 per cent., whereas in any investment of the proceeds of the sale of that land it is doubtful whether it would return that amount.

PIRIPĪ TAUWHARE examined. (No. 8.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are one of the Natives interested in this Greymouth Reserve?—Yes.
2. Do you wish to make a statement?—Yes. At a meeting of the beneficiaries held at Arahura on the 18th September last, the subject was brought forward of the beneficiaries meeting the deputation in regard to the conversion of the leasehold into freehold, and it was unanimously decided then not to sell. Mr. Uru represented the East Coast Natives as far down as South Canterbury, and he came up and attended the meeting.
3. And you were unanimous?—Yes, not to sell. We also decided to support the Public Trustee in the movement mentioned by him here to-day. Some of the leading people—my mother and others—said they would not like to part with the Greymouth land, because they say it is the balance of the fat remaining belonging to our ancestors. I produce the deed of the Potini sale, and they thought that if this particular property was sold it would be against the words that Mr. Mackay had with our forefathers, and therefore they asked us to come up here and support the Public Trustee in the course he proposes to take. Not only that, but the Natives of Arahura especially are not so well off with property as the other Natives about. We have our descendants, coming to about forty, fifty, or sixty, and the areas set aside by the sale would not give them 20 acres. There are others in the Greymouth Reserve who have only got 1 acre, 1 rood, and 2 perches, so that if this spot is sold and the money spent it will be a case of their depending on the State to keep them. There are fifty or sixty grandchildren now living. At Arahura the river is silting up, and wherever a Maori pa is the river is bound to encroach on it. All the rivers along the West Coast and all the Maori pas along the Reserve were set aside, and the places at Arahura and Hokitika cost a terrible lot of money to keep going; and, taking the big families, when you come to work it out there is only about an acre and a half, and they cannot get along at all. Therefore our committee decided to support the Public Trustee very strongly, and not to agree to the conversion of the leasehold into freehold.
4. *Mr. Parata.*] Then, the general wish of you people, who are the owners of this Greymouth Reserve, is that you do not under any circumstances desire to sell the land to the European lessees?—Yes.
5. You are entirely in support of all that has been stated by the Public Trustee?—Yes.
6. *Mr. Herries.*] Have you any objection to sell to the Government straight out?—That is a new subject, and we have not decided that. The only thing we considered was the question of the tenants wanting the freehold.
7. The figures given by the Public Trustee seem to show that you would get a bigger income if you sold to the Government and the money was invested than you do at present from the tenants. Has that fact been put before you?—No.
8. You have not considered the question of the Government purchasing?—No. If the subject comes before us we will consider it.
9. Who pays for the succession orders when a man dies—does the Public Trustee arrange all that?—No.
10. Each Maori?—Yes, each Maori has to pay for his own order.
11. There is a certain amount of expense incurred there: is it much?—Only 5s.
12. There is much more than that if there is a dispute?—That depends on the area. If there were twenty or thirty shares you would pay £5.
13. *Hon. Mr. Guinness.*] Do I understand the principal reason why you Arahura Natives and the Kaiapoi Natives who are interested in this Reserve refused to sell was that, by selling, your proportions would be so small that you may not have enough to exist on?—Of course, that will go before the committee.
14. You are afraid that might happen. If Mr. Poynton can satisfy you that the investment of the proceeds of the sale of this Greymouth Reserve will give you a larger income than you are getting now, would not your main objection to selling be done away with?—We would consider that separately. We reckon our tenants in Greymouth, knowing the railway is going through to Greymouth in three or four years, think the value will increase. They were labouring under great difficulties in the last thirty or forty years, greater difficulties than what they are labouring under now, and they were paying more rent than they are paying at the present time. Therefore, if we sell the property we may just get the value now, and not what it will be five years hence.
15. Do you not know that there is a strong feeling that in future, if there is a harbour made and a coaling-station at Point Elizabeth, six miles north of Greymouth, it will have the effect of depreciating the value of the Reserve considerably?—A little; but, of course, Greymouth will be