

of which were about to expire. They applied to the Government that those lands should not, on the application of the lessees, come under the Act of 1892, because they were quite capable themselves of taking the land and working it in a proper manner. They decided to make themselves a political body in order to elect a member to represent them, just as the Europeans elect a member to represent them, in Parliament. That is how they selected Dr. Pomare to represent them and endeavour to get redress for their injuries, and they are able to prove their ability to take the land and work it themselves. During my eight years' residence in this district, I have personally noticed the energy of the young people and their ability to work the lands on their own behalf by their taking up those portions that were available for them to take up. While the elders were alive the lands were held in common. Whoever did the work, it was looked upon as belonging to the whole community.

20. Have things changed now so far as that is concerned?—Yes.

21. You have told us that the Natives want their lands given back to them?—Yes.

22. Do you understand that in these proceedings it is only a question as to whether the Natives shall be allowed to bid for the leases?—Yes.

23. Why are you anxious that the Natives should be allowed to bid for the leases?—Because they will be able to bid and have the same advantages as the Europeans in procuring money as advances on security.

24. Do you think that if they get into possession of these leases it will help them later in their desire to get their lands handed back to them?—Yes.

25. Why do you think it will help them?—They have so progressed and are so energetic in their work now that they will be able then to demand the freehold.

26. Why do you think you will be in a better position to demand the freehold after you have got into possession of the leases than you are now?—Because they will be able to wipe off all the liabilities and then say the land is now ours.

27. Can you say whether there has been any change in the Maoris since the death of Te Whiti and Tohu?—Yes, a great change.

28. What is that change?—They are living on the lands and building houses, and breaking away from communism, and showing energy in farming, and sending their children to school. They are so progressed that they are able to take their places in the good things of the world.

29. Do you know any Maoris who are in favour of letting the pakehas convert their leases into the 1892 leases?—Not that I know of. The proof of it is that they are united to this union. It has not been suggested that there is one among them who would break away from the union or say that the European should continue in the 18,000 acres. They are united in saying that this land should be returned to them so that they may work it.

30. Kahu Pukoro told us that he took a petition down to Sir James Carroll?—Yes.

31. Did you have anything to do with the petition?—Yes. We convened a meeting for the purpose of selecting the persons who should go to Wellington. The union sent an invitation to Sir James Carroll inviting him to come amongst us and meet us here. That was a large meeting held at Normanby, and Sir James Carroll came, attended by a number of chiefs from different parts of Wanganui, Ngatiapa, Ngatikahungunu, and Ngatiraukawa.

32. Was this after Kahu Pukoro had gone to Wellington or before?—It was after Kahu went down to bring him up, and the pleas I have mentioned were put before him. Mr. Carroll complimented us upon our unity, and said it was the best and proper thing for us to unite in this way. He was very pleased to see it, and he was presented with a copy of the different subjects I have mentioned—a list of the objects of the union.

33. Did he say anything about the land?—Yes. He said, "Yes, it is good; we will work together." There were about a hundred Maori milkers present, and he said he was delighted to see the young people so energetic and united. Sir James Carroll returned and took with him a list of the objects of the union. That was backed up by a petition taken subsequently to him by a deputation consisting of a large number of people.

34. I think you are the Mr. Hipango who presented the park at Wanganui called Hipango Park?—Yes.

*Mr. Welsh:* No questions.

35. *Mr. Kerr:* You know, do you not, that the Ngatirahiri people have a considerable area of land from the Public Trustee?—Yes, at present, and then there was an Act passed, I believe, taking away the rights of these loyal people.

36. To the extent to which compensation awards had been granted to the Ngatirahiri people, the Public Trustee gave them lands under the Act?—Yes, I believe so.

37. Do you know how many acres were given?—I could not say. These subjects were discussed before the union.

38. You referred to promises that have not been fulfilled?—Yes.

39. What were the exact promises?—Those I have mentioned. I was there myself and saw the Ngatitama portion. Of that, 600 acres was returned to them, and it was investigated by the Court, but the balance of 700 acres was sold.

40. You say sold by the Public Trustee?—Yes.

41. But the Public Trustee has no power to sell—he has only power to lease?—He was the man appointed to look after the Native matters.

*Mr. Zachariah:* I might explain that. Ngatitama Reserve originally comprised 1,300 acres, and it is included in Parliamentary Paper A.—5B, 1884, see Schedule C, Native reserves, but not to be granted at present. By the time they came to be granted 700 acres had been sold, but not by the Public Trustee, presumably by the Crown. The lands mentioned by the witness as having been sold were not under the Public Trustee's administration.

42. *The Chairman:* Are you satisfied from your own investigations that the people are now particularly anxious to get on to their lands if they get them back and to work them?—Yes.

43. You know that from your own personal knowledge?—Yes.