

them by others with respect to those parts of the tribal estate over which they have, according to Maori usage, the chief right of ownership.

The advantages derived by persons under the circumstances I have mentioned, although in general of no great importance, are sometimes of more considerable value; but of whatever value they may be, they are lost when the land is alienated to a European, and are in general compensated by the receipt from the sellers of a small proportion of the purchase money received for the land. It often, nevertheless, has happened that the owners of the land have not given any compensation; the claim for which has been often turned against the European purchaser, and is not unfrequently, for want of information, mistaken by the purchaser for, or boldly erected by the Native claimant into, a claim of ownership in the land of a nature to invalidate or weaken the title of the European holder; which no claim of this nature can do, seeing that no right amounting to ownership was ever by Maori usage at any time vested in the person making the demand.

The circumstances I have here mentioned seem to have taken place, to a considerable extent, in the Hawke's Bay District; and the rather long list of complaints made against Native grantees seems, as far as the investigations of the Commission went, to have arisen out of them. But although these claims are ostensibly made against the Native grantees, I, both from statements of witnesses and from what I observed generally during the investigation, am of opinion that many of the claims of this nature were made under the expectation that the Commissioners would order the European purchasers in possession to pay these demands, which, if due at all, can only be due by the Native grantees to the Natives, to whom they owe compensation, and not by the European purchasers.

In a case of this description, a grantee against whom a demand for compensation was made said that the demand was perfectly just, and that he, the defendant, had no objection to the complainant receiving some money, provided the Commissioners would order it to be paid by somebody else; insinuating, at the same time, that a satisfactory conclusion of the matter would be for the Commissioners to pay it themselves.

Eleven complaints were made directly against the Government, and others against Government officers by name, though intended, no doubt, against the Government land purchase operations. Several of these claims were heard. A considerable proportion of these complaints were matters of no great consequence, which might have been settled by a short conversation with the local authorities; but others, in particular complaints Nos. 138 and 84, were of a very serious nature, disputing the right of the Government in two very extensive blocks of land. The reports on these cases (Nos. XXV. and XXXIII.) will show that I agree with His Honor Judge Richmond in considering both these complaints unfounded; but to the time of writing this report, I have not heard what the opinion of the Native Commissioners may be.

I am informed that fifty-five other complaints against the Government have been sent in to Mr. Locke, R.M., at Hawke's Bay; but as the complaints were made respecting purchases of land made before the date of the institution of the Native Land Courts, they did not come within the limits of the duties of the Commission, and therefore were not published or investigated.

Besides the complaints I have mentioned, there is a long list of charges and complaints, as follows:—

- Denials of sale, lease, or mortgage.
- Denials of having signed conveyances.
- Signed agreements under intimidation.
- Denials of having received payment.
- Denials of having received rent.
- Denials of sufficient payment.
- Charges generally of breach of agreement.
- Disputing generally all alleged alienations.
- Disputing right of grantees to sell without consent of others.
- Claims of persons, not grantees, to receive part of purchase money of land sold.
- "Desire to share in grant." This has been interpreted by complainants to mean a desire to receive part of purchase money by persons not grantees.
- "Taken my land from me." See Complaint No. 17. (List of Complaints.)
- Complaints that part of amount of bills charged against sellers, or paid by purchasers for sellers, are for spirituous liquors.
- Charges of false interpretation against licensed interpreters.

One complaint included with several others in the same case, impugns the decision of the Native Land Court, but the charge is laid against the interpreters and purchasers.

As it would have been impossible for the Commissioners to have gone through the long list of charges and complaints sent in, and to furnish reports thereon within the time prescribed, the complaints which have been investigated, and which are considerable in number, have been selected so as to be as much as possible representative of all the classes of charges or complaints which have been made.

I am not yet acquainted with the result of the deliberations of the two Native Commissioners, but the particular reports of the English Commissioners will show how small a proportion of the complaints heard has, in their opinion, been substantiated, and that where substantiated, are matters of no great importance, and which might have been easily settled by the parties themselves, or, failing such settlement, should have been referred to the ordinary Law Courts.

It will also be seen, where very serious and important charges have been brought against settlers and the Government, affecting in the highest degree both the titles to land and the character of persons, that, in the opinion of the Commissioners referred to, these charges are, without exception, either not proved (very partially proved) or entirely unfounded.

From the great number and unrestrained nature of the complaints made, and their general want of confirmation, so far as the investigations have extended,—from the character of the evidence by which attacks both against property and character have been attempted to be supported, and from the generally litigious spirit exhibited by the numerous complainants,—I am of opinion that this move-