Patea had far easier access to the Court than it was, unfortunately, usually found practicable to afford. The Court sat on the 1st August, 1876, to investigate the title to the whole of the block, comprising Owhaoko proper and Owhaoko Nos. 1 and 2. It had before it a plan which showed 164,500 acres, and therefore must have been a rough sketch-plan. Indeed, we know from what happened afterwards that it was a rough sketch-plan; and again I do not agree that the Court acted improperly, though perhaps not strictly within the Act of 1873, when it sat without having an absolutely correct survey before it. The memorandum now says that "the only evidence was as follows," &c. That is at the foot of page 4. It gives the evidence of Renata Kawepo; but I again submit that that is not the whole of the evidence, because the minute-book shows that objectors were challenged, and "Wiremu te Ota said that there was not one objector. The only person he knew to own the land was Renata Kawepo himself." Surely it was of importance to know that a Native in the Court stood up to say that Renata was the only person they knew to be interested. I admit that the statement is correct in strictness that Renata was the only witness examined; but that is because he called no one else but himself. Then it was for the Court to ascertain whether there is any other person interested; and on that being done Wiremu te Ota got up and said Renata was the only owner. I submit it was not fair to Judge Rogan to leave this important evidence out of the memorandum.

The Chairman: You will observe that on page 5 there is a quotation from the minute-book saying that some person got up to substantiate his claim.

Mr. Bell: Yes, I am so far wrong in that. That is in the minute of the finding of the Court. But the learned writer of this memorandum has omitted altogether what appears on the minutes about the challenge of objectors, and the name given of the chief who made this direct statement that they knew no other owner. The minute quoted in the memorandum is very vague. Some person had stood up and substantiated "his" claim. It ought to be "Renata's" claim. This was the whole of the case before the Court as to the examination of this title. The minute says "as to Blocks I. and II. a memorial of ownership will be issued;" and this is a point at which there arises the question of the accuracy of the minutes. The Court said that, as soon as a corrected plan was produced an order would be made. The Court was here dealing with the whole block, including the subdivisions. It seems that the Court adjourned to Porangahau; and on the 2nd December the Court was sitting there. On that day, while the Court was sitting, Mr. Maney came down to the Court with plans of the Owhaoko No. 1 and Owhaoko No. 2. And the same Judge who had previously ascertained the title of these blocks subject to the production of the plans (having had evidence before him of the persons entitled; for he had evidence in 1875 as well as 1876) on the 2nd December, 1876, told the Clerk to make a minute of the receipt of these plans, and that an order should be drawn up for the issue of a memorial for Blocks I. and II. On the 2nd December, while the Court sat at Porangahau, a minute was entered by the Clerk of the Court which was altogether erroneous. There is no question that as it was entered it was quite wrong from beginning to end. It does not pretend to have been made as of a previous date, and nobody pretends that it was a minute entered at the sitting of the Court. It was simply ordered by Judge Rogan that a minute should be entered recording what had been done, and what was to be done in consequence of the receipt of the plans. And when they got to Gisborne it seems to have been found out that this was altogether wrong; and the clerks, without consulting Judge Rogan, proceeded to remedy the mistake which had been made in the entry of this minute. And then, about the 7th December, at Gisborne, it was determined by Judge Rogan that he could not issue a memorial for the large block until he got a more complete survey. And he then ordered a memorial to issue for the two smaller blocks. And I submit that, though this was not perfectly regular, yet the entries in the minutes were made honestly by the clerks; and, though they did not represent accurately what was done, there cannot be the slightest suspicion left in the minds of the Committee that the minutes were "cooked" for the purposes of justifying some action which was taken upon the order of the Native Land Court. I say that this, though not regular, was not in the slightest degree improper. In fact some "taking the bull by the horns" was necessary in order to prevent technical difficulties from interfering with the just administration of the Native Land Acts. If the investigation was held, then the Judge rightly refused to allow technical objections to stand in the way of a memorial. It was not likely that the Natives would again meet to hold a fresh investigation into the title upon the receipt of the full survey. There was an entry, "No order" in respect to the large block; but that was clearly a mistake. There had been the same resolution of determination of title with respect to the large block as to the small ones; the only difference was that the plan of the large block had not arrived, and did not arrive until after the plan of the smaller blocks. And so you find that the memorial of the smaller blocks was issued in 1876, whereas the memorial for the larger block was not issued until October, 1877, and was then issued upon the receipt of the proper plan. Now, there is an end of Mr. Rogan in the matter. He comes no longer into the memorandum or into the proceedings of the Court. And I venture to be confident upon this statement, which I believe to be a correct summary of the facts as they have been proved before the Committee, that the Committee will not hesitate to acquit Mr. Rogan of the slightest imputation upon his character. I assure the Committee with all the earnestness I can bring to such an assurance that Mr. Rogan does feel that this memorandum is a slur upon his character. It is impossible to treat it otherwise. It is not openly asserted, but one cannot help feeling that it is suggested, that Mr. Rogan's action was not that which an honourable man would have adopted; and it is, to say the least, suggested that there has been a "cooking" of the minutes of the Court for the purpose of supporting improper and irregular proceedings of the Native Land Court. Mr. Rogan feels that that has been suggested against him; and he appeals to the Committee—and to Parliament through the Committee—which has heard his evidence not to pass this matter over in silence, not merely to conclude that it is impossible for any one who reads this evidence to say there is any suggestion of improper conduct against him, but to accord him that specific acquittal to which he is entitled at the hands of Parliament. For