

*Mr. Ballance* : I wish it to be understood that I am only referring to the confirmed leases. The petition before the Committee does not cover the whole of the leases on the West Coast—it only covers the confirmed leases. It refers to leases made by the Natives themselves, and not to ordinary leases made by the Public Trustee; and it only refers to the clause in the Act of 1884 which the Public Trustee read to the Committee yesterday.

*Mr. Carroll* : The petitioner might be asked, as he represents the people of his district in this matter, whether he would be willing to elect an Assessor to represent the Natives, or whether he would prefer to have the titles individualised by the Native Land Court, and the lands held separately.

*Petitioner* : I object altogether to the election of an Assessor. It should be left wholly to the Natives whether they will hold their lands in common or whether they should apply to the Land Court to have their shares determined. If the people decide to have their land subdivided and the share of each one determined, well and good: if the people desired to hold their lands in common, well and good; but they will certainly not agree to appointing an Assessor. This is no new objection of mine.

83. *Mr. Ballance* (to Petitioner).] But the people themselves would have the right to appoint?—No; they will not agree to that at all.

84. Suppose you were appointed yourself, would you object?—Yes.

*The Chairman* : If they do not individualise the land you must get the whole of them agreed upon any certain thing: if they want an Assessor you must get them all to agree to that. I understood the Petitioner to say that his people were not prepared to individualise their titles; the whole thing, in my opinion turns upon that. He might not be anxious to individualise his share, but the other Natives might be anxious to individualise the land.

*Mr. Carroll* : He can, or any person can, apply for the subdivision of his portion: the Act has been altered so that that may now be done.

*The Chairman* : The best way would be to subdivide the land.

85. *Mr. Monk* (to Petitioner).] Would it not be better, and more economical, to allow them to collect their own rents and rates, and manage their own affairs generally as they think best?—I would have no objection to pay rates because my individual share would be defined. Anything in fairness I would be quite willing to pay, but I should not like to be called on to pay an exorbitant rate.

86. *Mr. Ballance* (to Petitioner).] Are many of the owners of this land Te Whiti's followers?—No; these people live at Patea. They may go to Te Whiti's meetings occasionally, but I have never observed that they had Te Whiti's "brand" upon them: they were never "branded" by Te Whiti as belonging to him.

87. Is it true that they have had a meeting, and that they have resolved to come back to the Church of England?—No; the Natives extending in this direction all belong to the Wesleyan Church; those extending towards Waitotara are Roman Catholics.

88. Is it true that a number of these owners were with Te Whiti, and that these owners would not consent to anything being done?—We have not been implicated at all in anything which belongs to Te Whiti. Those remarks you have made do not in any way apply to our people at all. There are several ministers (of religion) who can bear out our statement in this respect. We are not under Te Whiti's government. He does not hold a mana over us. We derive mana from our ancestors. In something which might be for the common benefit no doubt we would think with Te Whiti, but we are not under his government.

89. The clause requires that the whole of the owners should assent. It is alleged that the assent of the whole of the owners could not be obtained because some of them were Te Whiti's people: that they were with Te Whiti at the time they were asked for their assent: and that they returned for answer that Te Whiti would not take any account of it at all?—We do not give any allegiance whatever to Te Whiti: we objected to the principle of that Act. We are not Te Whiti's people.

90. I know that you are not Te Whiti's people; but if there were only one man among your people who, being under the influence of Te Whiti, refused to give his assent, then the purpose of the Act could not be carried out?—I know nothing of this: we have nothing to do with Te Whiti.

91. *Mr. Taiwhanga* (to Petitioner).] If Te Whiti approved of my Bill now before the House would your people agree to it?—I have said that I do not acknowledge Te Whiti. He may agree with your Bill, but I have nothing to do with that.

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