

394. *Mr. Peacock.*] Is that your opinion?—It is both mine and the opinion of the Natives.
395. You are satisfied their objections are reasonable as against the Public Trustee?—Yes; I think they are.
396. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you ever studied the regulations that have been made?—I have had them and seen them.
397. Do you know how the consent of the Natives was obtained?—No; it was never obtained; not that of any Native I know.
398. *Mr. Bell.*] Did they refuse to consent?—They always refused.
399. *Mr. Sinclair.*] You stated how the arbitration was conducted in reference to the Okahu cases?—Yes.
400. Was there any special clause as to the improvements to be effected?—I do not recollect the clauses.
401. Did this lease, so far as you can remember, contain a clause that the lessee was to effect certain improvements?—All the leases had that clause in them.
402. And that the improvements were to revert to the Natives at the expiry of the lease?—Yes.
403. Did the greater number of leases contain this clause or clauses?—Yes; I should say they were in all of them.
404. Was the will under which you acted drawn up by a solicitor?—Yes.
405. In Hawera?—Yes.
406. What was the state of the land in those two cases when it was taken by Mr. Caverhill?—It was partly fern, but mostly grass; the Natives were cutting grass-seed upon them every year.
407. Much or little?—A considerable quantity.
408. Do you remember what revenue they derived from this?—No; I could not state the number of bags they cut.
409. But you do know of their cutting a good deal of seed?—Yes.
410. Do you know anything of Mr. John Hislop's appointment as arbitrator?—Personally I do not know; I have heard.
411. You have stated that the Natives objected to the administration of the land by the Public Trustee: was that the action of the Natives throughout the whole district?—The Natives throughout the whole district are constantly objecting to what was done in that matter; but some Natives round Hawera—
412. Do you know why they are dissatisfied with the management by the Public Trustee?—Only what I state.
413. Because he did not consult them?—That is what they say.
414. You stated that there were certain Natives in the district without land who had to lease land from Europeans: do you mean the Natives in Okaiawa, who are leasing land from Europeans?—No.
415. Rangiwiheta and others?—There are some, but I do not know of my own knowledge.
416. Why do they lease from Europeans?—Because they are without land.
417. In some of those large reserves from Mokoia to Hawera one-fourth of the land is leased, taking in Whareroa Reserve?—It is rather more than that.
418. What is the balance of the land? Is it fit for occupation?—Some of it might be fit for occupation; it is bush mostly; it is broken, and lays back from the road.
419. Is that a sort of land suitable for occupation?—No.
420. Is there sufficient in the block left for cultivation?—Not merely for cultivation, but even for rearing stock they are unsuitable.
421. Is it not certain nobodies in the hapus have let the hapu lands—all the available land—and left not enough? [Mr. Bell objected, and Committee deliberated.]
422. *Mr. Rennell* (Reserves Trustee).] There is one clause in this petition which refers to the Reserves Trustee, and the action taken in regard to the confirmed leases; that clause must refer to me. I would, therefore, like to ask, Do you think that I should have consulted with the Natives on legal matters, such as suing, and the different nice points of law?—What I think they mean is that you should consult them when the rents are in arrear, and should advise them—talk to them about it.
423. Do you mean to say that I have not talked to them on these matters?—No; so far as I know you have been very explicit.
424. There is another point, as to the definition of interests—that is, defining each man's share. You were present at my meeting: were not the Natives there themselves?—Yes; most of the Natives.
425. Was what was done their own action or mine?—It was their action.
426. I simply confirmed what they did?—You heard what evidence they had to bring forward, and you confirmed it.
427. The Waitotara Natives adopted that plan?—Yes, precisely.
428. Do you think I could have adopted any other plan?—I do not think you could have adopted any other.
429. Do you think anything could be done more fair?—No.
430. Do you remember the meeting at Hukaterere: you were present?—Yes.
431. Do you recollect my explaining the Act of 1887, and the regulations under it?—Yes.
432. Did I leave anything unexplained?—No; I think you explained it in full.
433. Did I not distribute the Act in Maori, and the regulations also in Maori?—Yes.
434. In conclusion, did I not invite questions from them on all matters which were not clear to them?—Yes; and they put questions to you on the matter.
435. *Dr. Fitchett.*] You say most of the Natives were present when Mr. Rennell took evidence