

Natives from whom it was impracticable to obtain a voice, witness said: I always thought there would be a difficulty there, but I also thought it would be got over. It was an idea, and nothing more.

462. *Mr. Levi.*] Did your advice about arbitration apply to all the Natives?—No; only to those Natives concerned in the confirmed leases. It had nothing to do with the Natives north of the Waingongoro.

THURSDAY, 17TH JULY, 1890.

NGARANGI KATITIA examined.

463. *Mr. Levi.*] What is your name?—Ngarangi Katitia.
 464. What hapu do you belong to?—Te Pukorokoro hapu.
 465. Is your name in the Crown grant for any of the West Coast reserves?—Yes.
 466. Which?—For Otauto Block.
 467. Any other?—I am also in a block called Patari.
 468. Any other?—I am also in another block called Haututu, bounded by one of the main roads.
 469. Any other?—I am also in a block called Hamua, near Hawera.
 470. Did you sign any of those leases which have been confirmed?—The first leases?
 471. The leases that have been confirmed?—I signed my name to some of them.
 472. Which ones?—Ross's, of Otauto, was the first block I signed my name to.
 473. To whom was that leased?—Alfred Gower. George Gower is at present occupying.
 474. Did you sign any other?—Yes; I signed the lease to another block called Haututu.
 475. To whom?—To a man named Benton: Alfred Symes is the present owner.
 476. How were the rents of these lands fixed?—The Europeans, who first leased the lands, said we must only charge a small amount for rent, so that they could make something out of the land; that they would return the land to the Natives with all the improvements on it when the lease expired.
 477. Did you accept a low rental, then, on that account?—Yes; we arranged that every five years, or seven years in some of the leases, the rent was to be increased. When the Natives leased the land they did so with the idea that all the improvements left by the lessees would be given up to them.
 478. Take Ross's lease, what was the condition of the block Otauto when it was originally leased?—Part of it was in grass, part in bush, and part in fern. European cattle and horses were grazing on it at the time.
 479. How much of it was in grass?—If I had a plan I would be able to point out to you what portion was in grass, but I cannot say how many acres there were.
 480. Was there a large or a small part in grass?—Most of it was in grass; some places there was fern, in other places fern and grass growing together; some places there was no grass at all.
 481. What improvements have been made since the lease?—Fences have been put up on it; a wool-shed and a house have been put on it; also a bull-shed and stock-yards, and a sheep-dip and dam. It was Dasent who built the wool-shed and dip, and put up some of the fences.
 482. Was there any grassing done by the lessees?—Those places where there was only fern were burnt off by the lessees and grass was sown.
 483. Any bush cleared?—They did cut down some bush, but it was not very extensive—it was light bush they cut down.
 484. How long ago was the fencing done?—I think they commenced erecting fences in the year 1876. The first man that leased that block was Captain Blake; then afterwards John Ross occupied it. It was let to another man named Dacent—that is, Blake first occupied; he leased to his shepherd, Ross; then Ross leased to Dasent; and after that Ross leased and got possession again.
 485. Have any fences been erected of late years?—There was a fence put up lately to fence off a paddock of wheat.
 486. Was it a long fence?—No, it was not a very long line of fence; the piece put under crop was about 90 acres.
 487. How long ago was this?—It was the year before last. He then sublet it to Blake and Edward Derrett for 17s. 6d. an acre to crop. They finished off this year.
 488. How long ago was the house built?—The house was built two or three years after the lease was taken. Then it was burnt, and another house was built. It was about three years ago that the new house was built.
 489. Was it a bigger house?—No, it was the same size; all these improvements were made since 1878.
 490. When was the bush cleared?—I do not know what year it was cut down, but it has been cut down several years.
 491. More than six years?—I think it is more than six years since it was cut down.
 492. Do you know whether Ross is subleasing any portion of the place?—Yes; he has leased to Edward Derrett at 17s. 6d. an acre; that was for a second crop of oats.
 493. How much land was it?—Ninety acres; Ross also cultivated over 30 acres, outside of these 90 acres.
 494. Do you know of any offers made to the Natives for Ross's land before he had it?—Yes; J. Southby made an offer. He leased a piece of land about the time the Natives were taken prisoners to Otago. He owed the Natives £1,000, but he did not pay it. When they—the Maoris—came back to Otauto he offered to lease the land at 5s. an acre, and to give them the £1,000; but we did not agree to that.