

911. What has been done within the last six years?—Cutting down a portion of the forest.
 912. When was that done?—I could not say how long ago it was, whether it was one, two, or more years ago.
 913. Is it more than six years ago or less?—I could not say whether it is six or four years ago.
 914. Have any buildings or fences been erected within the last six years?—No.
 915. Did you attend the Arbitration Court?—No.
 916. Why did you not?—Because I objected to the arbitrators dealing with our land.
 917. What did you think the arbitrators were going to do?—I heard that they were going to extend the leases of our properties for thirty years.
 918. That they had done so?—That they would do so.
 919. Have you any complaint to make against the Public Trust Office?—No.

PARAEROA examined.

920. *Mr. Levi.*] What tribe do you belong to?—Ngarauru.
 921. What position do you hold in your tribe?—I am a chief of our tribe.
 922. Is your name in the Crown grant of any of the West Coast settlements reserves?—Yes.
 923. Which of them?—Otauto.
 924. Did you sign any of the leases of that reserve?—Yes; the original lease.
 925. What are the names of the lessees?—There is Ross.
 926. Any other?—Blake was the original, Ross the new leaseholder.
 927. Any other?—It was the same piece of land that was sublet to another European.
 928. What is his name?—William Gower.
 929. Is it the same piece of land?—It was another portion of the piece that was let to Blake.
 930. How was the rent of the original leases fixed?—It was leased to the Europeans.
 931. But how were the rents determined?—The first part (period) of the lease they were to pay 4s. 6d. an acre rent.
 932. That was for?—Ross's lease.
 933. Did you consider that rent high or low at the time?—We thought it was a low rental.
 934. Why did you accept a low rental?—We did so with the object of having the improvements left on the property.
 935. What was the condition of the land leased to Ross at the time it was originally leased to Blake?—It was a good piece of land; a portion of it had been cultivated by ourselves.
 936. Was there any bush on it?—Yes.
 937. What had you and your people done in the way of cultivation upon it?—In some places it may have been 5 acres that we cultivated; in other places 4 acres; in other places perhaps 10 acres.
 938. What did you do to it?—We sowed it in grass.
 939. What did Ross do to it?—He fenced it, and sowed a portion in grass.
 940. Did he put up any buildings?—Yes; there is a house upon it.
 941. Anything else?—There are sheep-shearing sheds on the property.
 942. Any bush felled?—He cut down a small portion of bush; they were not very large trees which he cut.
 943. Which of these improvements were done within the last six years?—There have been no improvements made within the last six years.
 944. What was the condition of the land before it was let to William Gower?—Portion was in forest, portion in furze, portion in grass.
 945. What improvements did William Gower make on it?—He put up some fencing upon it; only one line of fence.
 946. Any bush?—Yes; he cut down some forest.
 947. Any buildings on the land?—None.
 948. Did he plough the land?—Yes, he did, a portion of it, and put it in crop.
 949. Did you attend the Arbitration Court?—Yes.
 950. What did you do there?—I attended to give my evidence before the Court.
 951. What did you understand the Arbitration Court was held for—to determine what?—To give an extension of the leases for thirty years; that is what I understood.
 952. *Mr. Stewart.*] Did you understand that the arbitrators had power to extend the leases or not?—I do not know whether they had any authority or not to do so.
 953. *Mr. Levi.*] Did you understand that the only thing they had to do was to fix the rent?—Yes; I understood they came there to give an extension of the leases for thirty years.
Mr. Bell.: It is not contended that these Natives consented to these leases being granted.
 954. *Mr. Levi.*] What complaint have you to make about the Public Trustee, if any?—I and my people objected to the Arbitration Court being held for the purpose of extending the leases for thirty years because they believed it was through him that the Court was set up in Taranaki to give extension of leases to thirty years. Another fault they found with the Trustee was because of the length of time that passed without receiving any rent for their properties—that is, under the original leases. These were all the objections I had to make.
 955. Did you give evidence to the Arbitration Court?—Yes.
 955A. Were you asked any question as to the value of the land?—No.
 956. Were you asked any question as to the improvements which had been made on the land?—No.
 957. Were you asked any question with reference to what would be a fair rent for the land?—No.