

style that now obtains? Large schools, with sheep- or cattle-farms attached, where fruit-growing was also carried on, and with skilled people to teach the boys how to make shoes, to do carpentering-work, and things of that sort. Would that be a wise thing?—Who would have the control over the land?

843. Committees of the district?—Committees such as you mentioned before?

844. Yes?—The reason that I have asked this question is that the present schools are not very well arranged, and the Government claim them as schools for themselves. And that is the reason why I think it would be a good thing for reserves to be made as you say, and the Committees to have the control over them. It is a very clear suggestion, and would be a most excellent arrangement, and should be given effect to.

845. Then, too, the girls could be taught the use of the dairy, how to work sewing-machines, and, in fact, everything that a woman should be instructed in?—I think it would be a very good arrangement indeed, for the Committee would have the control in all these matters, and these establishments should be set up so that the young people could be educated and taught how to work usefully.

846. Do you think it would be advisable and proper for a law to be passed to compel the Maori children to attend where there are good schools, food and clothing, and house-room, and not allow the parents to draw the children away perpetually? Of course they would have regular holidays?—That is rather a difficult matter, because in some cases it is the parents who are at fault for the children not going to school.

847. Then, would you have a law that the parents should be punished for their children not coming to school?—These are matters of detail that I think should be left to the Committee to determine. Once the Committees had the power in these matters they would see that what was right and proper should be done.

CAMBRIDGE, 25TH MARCH, 1891.

EDWARD WALTER PUCKEY sworn and examined.

848. *Mr. Rees.*] If you will be good enough, Judge Puckey, to give us the benefit of your experience, we shall be much obliged to you. We have examined ex-Judge Fenton, and Mr. Rogan, and Mr. James Mackay, the three first Judges of the Native Land Court, and, seeing that none of those gentlemen are now acting, we are anxious to obtain the opinions of some of those Judges who are now acting in the Court. You are acting as a Judge of the Native Land Court?—I am.

849. How long have you been a Judge of that Court?—Nearly ten years.

850. For what period of time prior to that had you means of obtaining any knowledge as regards the working of the Court and the Native-land laws?—Since the beginning of January, 1874.

851. Are you aware of the existence of disputes between Natives and Europeans in relation to titles to land?—I may say that I have heard of them, but personally I have known nothing of them.

852. But even in the Courts you preside over you have heard that such do exist?—I cannot remember any case which came before me in which there was any dispute.

853. You have heard of them, then, only as a matter of report?—That was all.

854. Are you aware of any case in which non-compliance with technical matters in the Native Land Act has invalidated the title—of course, I include the Native Land Court Act as well?—There is one case only that I can call to mind, and that was at Hokianga. A half-caste—who was also an owner—purchased the interest of some of the Native owners. The block was held under memorial of ownership, and applied to the Court for a division, and an order in his favour, which was made; but it now appears to be invalid.

855. Do you know of any case in which a grant has been declared invalid?—There is the judgment of the Supreme Court, I think, in the case of *Poaka v. Ward*.

856. Are you aware of other cases in which the titles to land have been invalidated by judgments obtained in the Supreme Court?—I have seen such cases mentioned in the papers, of course, do not remember much about them.

857. Now, are you aware of the feeling of the Natives in regard to the payment of fees in the Native Land Court?—Court fees?

858. Yes. Do they complain of these fees being onerous and heavy?—Not so far as I know. They pay cheerfully, and display a certain amount of gratification in being able to pay.

859. Do you mean gratification in paying, or in being able to pay?—In being able to pay, I think. A Native feels proud in being able to pay the fee. I think, myself, the fees are not onerous.

860. What is the rule as regards payment of fees? In cases in which there are four, five, or six contending parties, what is the rule regarding fees?—The principal claimant pays a fee every day; all the others only pay fees during the period they take up the time of the Court.

861. They pay when they speak or interfere in the case before the Court?—Yes. I generally allow them fifteen minutes' grace, and even if they should exceed that by a short time I do not charge.

862. If they interfere practically?—Then they pay the fee.

863. What is the fee?—One pound per diem.

864. Can you state whether the sitting of the Court at different centres is advantageous to the Natives who have to come some distance from their homes and cultivations to attend the Court, or whether it is disadvantageous?—I may say that I know of no case of any hardship. The Court generally fixes the sitting at as advantageous a position as it can. It would be impossible for the Court to go and sit at every Native village; besides, in many cases the Court would be at the mercy of the Natives. There was one case in which it sat at Ohacawai, at the Bay of Islands.