

*Rev. Wiremu Pomare*: It is the Native Land Court that causes the main difficulty between the Maoris. Let me explain about that Court. In the year 1864 the Native Land Court began its work. The first lot brought before it was Mahurangi. Crown grants were issued in those days. It was not stated that there should be ten people in the grant. The whole of the owners of that land were not included in the Crown grant. There was only one person put in the grant, and trouble came upon the tribe in consequence. A Government notification was issued that no persons had any right to go afterwards and object, or to apply to be inserted as owners. Application was subsequently made to have the case reinvestigated, and afterwards the Government itself came into trouble with the land. In this way the trouble commenced in the Native Land Court; but you, Mr. Rees, will understand that, and will know that that trouble extended all over and among the Native tribes. Then the Natives and the chiefs asked that the work of the Native Land Court should be discontinued, and it was stated then that Native Committees should adjudicate upon the lands within their own districts, and the land was awarded by the Judges and the Assessors to the people who claimed it. Those now who have suffered from the operation of the Native Land Court feel greatly aggrieved. That is why we wish our strong objection recorded against the Native Land Court, and that we, the Maoris, should adjudicate upon our own cases—that we, the Natives, ourselves should investigate our own titles to our own lands. In the year that I went to Wellington with Major Ropata we applied that power should be given to the Native Committees to adjudicate upon our titles to land. The Premier and the Native Minister said that a Committee of twelve had power to deal with our land; but that Committee had not power. Some land in the district of the Ngapuhi was investigated by the Committee, but their decision was not authenticated. The land in respect to which this decision was given by the Committee was subsequently brought before the Native Land Court, and that decision was upheld, and the decision given by the Judge and Assessor in the Native Land Court was clearly seen by the people. I will speak now with regard to certain land in respect of which I am a sufferer. It is land belonging to my ancestors. That land was handed over to the twelve—to the Committee—to be adjudicated upon. The Committee did not give a decision upon that land on account of the strength of my claim; and the other person who wished to get that land made application to the Native Land Court. The Judge was Mr. Puckey, and Hamiora Mangakahia was the Assessor. I was at Wellington at the time the case came before the Court. I stated to the Judge at the beginning of the Court that it was not right that that case should be dealt with by the Court, as I was going to Wellington; but the Judge did not listen to what I had to say. The investigation of the title went on nevertheless, and the judgment was in favour of the claim of that man, and I am a sufferer in consequence. Subsequently I made application for a rehearing, and the rehearing went before the Chief Judge, Hone Peeti being the Assessor. I said it was not proper that Hone Peeti should be in the case, as he was one of the twelve; but the Chief Judge did not listen to me, and the decision of the rehearing confirmed the original decision. I was not fully questioned as to what I had to say. In this way that land has gone from me, through the action of the Native Land Court. Now, I ask the Commissioners to give some consideration to this affliction that has befallen me, for in this way the whole of the Ngapuhi people condemn the Native Land Court. That is all I have to say with regard to the Native Land Court. Now with regard to the laws. I am not able to speak very fully on the subject of the laws, seeing that the Ngapuhi as a tribe are not assembled here to-day. We can only express here now what we individually think, and for this reason: The laws made by Parliament are those which have constituted the Native Land Court, and, as the greater number of the Ngapuhi are absent to-day, our views might be different from those held by the others on that subject. Let me speak now about the laws made by the Parliament. I was at Wellington, and I attended at the Legislative Council, along with Paora Tuhaere and Hamiora Tupaea, and gave evidence before a Committee of that Council. We requested that the Premier and the Native Minister should come to a meeting that was to be held at the place where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, so that the Premier and the Native Minister might explain to the assemblage there the laws relating to the Native lands, so that the whole of the people of the tribes might hear what they had to say, and so that the whole of the people should hear what these laws were, and should approve, or otherwise, of those laws; and that the Premier and the Native Minister might have the opportunity of hearing whether the people dissented or not from those laws. But the Committee of the Council did not agree that the Premier should come. There was some trouble then with respect to these Native-land laws. Hence it is that I hesitate to express my views with respect to these laws, lest what I say might be different from what others of the Ngapuhi might say. If a great meeting of the Ngapuhi had been called, and our views were solicited, I could then explain what my views are. That is with regard to the laws. Now, the Ngapuhi have a member to represent them in Parliament. We shall lay our views before him, and he will then lay them before Parliament. That is all with respect to that subject.

*Mr. Rees*: There are one or two questions I would like to ask Wi Pomare. First of all, with regard to the Native Land Court, do you think that the Native Committees could define the tribal boundaries, the subtribal, and the hapu boundaries better than the Native Land Court, and define also the list of owners belonging to these divisions?

*Rev. Wiremu Pomare*: That work could be done by the Committees. We have laid down our boundary-lines between the different hapus. But these boundary-lines we have not determined, and cases existing between our different hapus are not regarded by the Government. The Government will not listen to the decisions we have come to. All these boundaries we have fixed having been agreed to and determined upon, perhaps some person may apply to have his particular piece cut out, and the Government consents, and the result is a great deal of confusion. I have already explained that the whole of the Ngapuhi are suffering from the action of the Government and of the Native Land Court. The Government will not listen to us, but still persists in surveying our lands, and trouble then befalls the Natives. The Natives themselves quite lately were actually