

Mr. Mackay : It will save our time if they are satisfied that their views have been represented by Mr. Haigh, as in that case it will be unnecessary to examine them separately ; but if any of them has any special case to mention that is not covered by what Mr. Haigh dealt with he may be examined.

Mr. Samuel : I mentioned Mr. Mitchinson's case.

Mr. Rees : It is governed by the same principles, what is wanted being security of tenure and payment for improvements from the incoming tenant.

Mr. Smith : It would be a national calamity if Mr. Mitchinson were to lose his land. I have asked these gentlemen, and they are satisfied that Mr. Haigh has stated their case.

WANGANUI, 27TH APRIL, 1891.

The Commission sat in the Native Land Courthouse at 11.30 a.m. Present : Messrs. J. Carroll, M.H.R., and Thomas Mackay. A number of Natives were in attendance.

Mr. Carroll : We are a Commission appointed by the Parliament to inquire into the existing state of the law in reference to dealings between Natives and Europeans for the lands of the former, and we have also to make inquiry with regard to Native Land Court matters. It is more than probable that in the approaching session Parliament will make new laws on these subjects. Whether such laws will be favourable to the views and interests of the Natives I cannot say. At any rate, you are now afforded this opportunity of expressing your opinions on the subject, with the view of enabling the Commission to place those opinions before Parliament. We have visited several other Native districts in the North Island, and we have received the ideas of the different tribes whom we have met. We have ascertained that there is a strong feeling in the direction of reform, the consensus of opinion being that it is desirable to do away with the individual dealing in Native land, and to resort instead to the old principle of settling everything by tribal consent. In regard to the Native Land Court, it seems to be the general wish of the Natives in other parts to affiliate the Native Committees with the Native Land Court; and especially that in original cases, where it is purely Native title, all tribal boundaries and hapu divisions should be settled by the Maori Committees, and afterwards submitted to the Native Land Court for confirmation. These are the leading points; and it is for you now to offer us your ideas with respect to them.

Takerengi Mete Kingi : I rise to express my congratulations at the arrival of the Commissioners in this part of the Island. There has been very little time since I received your wire for me to communicate with the Committee of the district. The great body of the people of this part of the district have been for two weeks engaged with the Committee up the river considering the laws that were passed by the last Government. I am therefore not able to explain fully the results of the labours of the Committees of Wanganui for the past couple of weeks, because their labours are not yet completed. If a messenger should come from the Committee that is now sitting, and should I learn from him anything of moment, I will inform the Commissioners of it. I am very sorry indeed at the absence of the Natives; but it will be for the Commissioners to consider whether the report which the Committee will draw up should not be submitted to them. Matters that are within our cognisance we shall lay before the Commissioners. As to the matters that the Committee have taken in hand, I cannot undertake to say what their decisions may be.

Mr. Carroll : It is quite right; you cannot let us know that.

Takerengi Mete Kingi : Would it not be well for the Chairman of the Committee to furnish you with the result of the Committee's deliberations?

Mr. Mackay : It can be sent to Mr. Dickson, of the Native Land Court here, with whom we shall leave our address, and he can forward it to us.

Takerengi Mete Kingi : Should there be any delay I will write to the Chairman of the Committee to hurry matters on. If you were staying here any time I could write to him to come down.

Mr. Mackay : The arrangement with Mr. Dickson does not necessitate any hurry in the matter. If we have it within ten days it will do.

Takerengi Mete Kingi : I saw some of the chiefs on Saturday and spoke to them about the matter, but they thought it better to wait until the Committee had finished its work. With reference to the West Coast matters from Kai Iwi this way, there is a section of Natives in the hall at present who may have something to say on that subject. I shall ask them to state whatever they have to say. As for myself, I have nothing more to say. When Tōpia, Chairman of our Committee, comes down we shall be able to let Mr. Dickson have the report of the Committee.

Te Waka Hakaraia : I desire to express my congratulations to the Commissioners for coming here to-day and informing us of the object for which they have been going round the country. I am very sorry we did not know you were coming before—that is to say, the people of Kai Iwi and Ngarauru. If notice had been received we would have understood you were coming, and the people would have been prepared to meet you here to-day. All I can say is to express my satisfaction with what Mete Kingi has said with respect to the meeting that is being held up the Wanganui River in the direction of seeking out matters with reference to the Land Court. There is also to be a meeting of Ngarauru at Patea on the 6th May next, with the object of investigating the same matters that the meeting spoken of by Mete Kingi has under consideration. We who are here are not in a position to express our views, owing to the absence of those other persons. Therefore I think that Mete Kingi's suggestion should be adopted, and that the conclusions arrived at by the meeting to be held on the 6th May should also be forwarded to the Commissioners.

Mr. Mackay : Is the meeting up the river here being held at Jerusalem?—Yes, the Wanganui Natives are holding their meeting at Jerusalem; and the Ngarauru meeting will be held on the 6th May at Hukatere, close to Patea, at Tauru's place.