

Native Land Court should be discontinued and brought to an end. It is known to the people that there is trouble arising from the Native Land Court, and, notwithstanding that, they still send in their applications to the Court, to be dealt with by the Court. And the Court has to consent to deal with the applications sent in to it, even although the lamentations are great indeed that are rendered up by the Natives. In spite of these lamentations they still avail themselves of the services of the Court. My idea is that perhaps it would be as well to bring gradually to a close the operation of the Native Land Court, and give careful deliberation to the question of what should be done. If I laid my view regarding that before the Commissioners, other speakers might arise who would take a different view from that entertained by myself, and there would therefore be a conflict of opinion. I consider that the Natives throughout the whole Island should carefully consider the matter, and arrive at a common agreement before anything should be done. There is one matter referred to by those who spoke first, that I uphold: that is, that unreserved power should be given the District Native Committees. If their powers are sufficiently increased they could do all the necessary work connected with the administration of their lands. Although the Ngatarawa Block has already been mentioned to the Commissioners, I wish to refer to it again, in order that the matter connected with it may be made quite clear to the Commissioners. Ngatarawa was a block that was not surveyed at the time the Oamarunui Block was surveyed. Ngatarawa was specially reserved for the Natives. When the Oamarunui Block went through the Court, two persons were put in the title as owners, and these two people sold Oamarunui, besides mortgaging Ngatarawa, the land that was set apart for the benefit of the tribe. That land has in consequence passed to the European, and the hardship and injury thus inflicted upon the Natives have been impressed upon their minds ever since. When the Natives knew that this land had passed into the hands of the European they took possession of it. And when the men had to go away to engage in their shearing operations advantage was taken of their absence to turn the women off, and that land became the subject of litigation in the Supreme Court; but the Natives have lost their case. This is a matter that the Commissioners may be familiar with. The land did not belong—even through their ancestors—to the two men who dealt with it, and the Commissioners must understand that the land belongs to the tribe. This is a matter that should be thoroughly gone into, because the people are loudly complaining of the wrong that has been done in connection with it.

*Mr. Carroll.*] You say that your view is different from the view expressed by the other speakers with regard to the Native Land Court?—Yes.

In your opinion, should the Court remain in force?—Yes, that is what I think.

And that the Native Committees should have powers conferred upon them in respect of the districts for which they are elected?—Yes.

And that the Committee should act in concert with the Native Land Court?—Yes.

In what way should they act in conjunction with the Native Land Court?—The Committee should act along with the Native Land Court.

And the Committee and the Court should proceed jointly in investigating the titles to land?—Yes; and they should investigate together.

Do you mean that the Committee should act like a jury in the Supreme Court?—No; they should act, having a defined power.

Do you think that if the Committee acts in conjunction with the Court it would simplify the investigation of titles and the style of procedure?—I cannot say.

How would this do: The Court to give certain powers to the Committee, and then the results of its labours to be reported to the Court in order to be confirmed by the latter body?—I would be agreeable to that.

In your opinion, would the Committee be a more effective body for ascertaining the title to Native land?—I think so, because it would be composed of Maoris. They would know the title to the land better than the Court.

Would you, then, transfer the whole power of investigating the title to Native land to the Committee?—The Committee and the Native Land Court should have equal power.

Are there difficulties in connection with the Native Land Court at the present time—obstacles in the way which render its procedure cumbrous?—I do not know what difficulties, obstacles, or encumbrances there may be in connection with the Native Land Court. I am not in the habit of having my lands subdivided by the Court, and I am not, therefore, in a position to give any decided answer to your question. Those who are in the habit of having cases before the Court are in a position to say if there is any cumbrousness, and what that cumbrousness may be.

Are you familiar with the operations of the Native Land Court in its mode of procedure?—I have seen a good deal of the working of the Native Land Court.

And have you not seen any cumbrousness in its operations?—No, I have not seen it, because I have been acting as an agent.

Do you think there are any means of simplifying the operations of the Native Land Court?—It would be an excellent thing if the operations of the Court could be simplified and made lighter and easier. Those who have seen where the evils are will be in a position to mention them to the Commissioners.

Would it not be a good thing for the Native Committees to ascertain the titles of the hapus and the tribes to land, and then submit the result of their work to the Native Land Court?—Yes, that is what should be done; and that is the reason why application is made for the Committees to have power given them.

*Hamiora Mangakahia:* I wish to offer an explanation regarding my appearance on this occasion before the Commission. The Commissioners will remember that I appeared before them in Auckland. What I stated then in my opening remarks to the Commission was that the Commissioners should examine and see into the existing Native laws, and ascertain what good points there are in them. I thought there were some good points, but I was unable at the time to mention these particular