

portion found to belong to the Government by that Commission and the remainder of the block. Now, here is where the Government were to blame. The Government knew in September that only 1,900 acres or 2,000 acres belonged to them, and if they had proceeded at once with the survey the whole matter would have been concluded in the first week of March. As it is now, the Court, the Judges, and those engaged have to return to Marton on the 3rd June and possibly go through a great amount of evidence to define the ownership of that 23,000 acres. With regard to the map numerous complaints have been made, and one of the officers of the Survey Department, who came to Marton, stated that when the map was presented to him for approval he did not think it was in a fit state to be approved, and declined to give his certificate, but that such pressure was brought to bear upon him at head-quarters that he had to approve of it. This was openly stated in the Court.

Did he mention "head-quarters"?—He mentioned the Surveyor-General. He stated when the map was brought to him that it did not comply with the rules, but the Surveyor-General told him nevertheless to approve of it; and he had to do it. The Natives are responsible for £2,300 for that survey, and the plan is of no more use for the Subdivision Court than that painted scene behind you. One more word, and that is with regard to what it cost the Natives for that Subdivision Court at Marton. There have been statements made, both in public prints and by members of the present Government, which I may say are highly exaggerated. The supposed sixteen or twenty agents engaged in that case were Captain Blake, Mr. J. M. Fraser, Mr. Alex. Macdonald, and myself. These were the licensed European agents in that case. When the case was concluded in March, as far as it had gone, I asked two of these agents if they could possibly compute what was the probable amount of the cost the Natives had been put to up till March. One gentleman sent me a memorandum: he had gone into the matter, and he thought the outside cost the Natives had been put to was £10,000. Another gentleman sent me his estimate that the amount was £4,500. I went into the calculation very carefully myself, and I calculated that it had cost the Natives £5,000. Taking the average of these three sums, it cost those 437 people £16 a head for eight months' working, paying living and Court expenses. If the land had been divided into equal interests each of these parties would have had about 650 acres, which they get subdivided at the infinitesimal cost of 6d. an acre, including all living-expenses for eight months. I do not think I need delay the Commission by saying anything more, but I thought it might possibly come within the province of your investigations to afford opportunity for clearing up a matter that has exercised the minds of a great many people interested in Native matters, and one in which the Natives feel they have just cause of complaint. I can assure the Commission that everything I have stated with regard to the Awarua Block is strictly correct. I have to thank the Commission for giving me permission to make this statement.

*Mr. Rees:* The Commission is very much obliged for the evidence given and statements made by the gentlemen who have appeared before us this morning. If the Europeans have now finished, we shall be prepared to hear what further the Natives may have to say.

*Paora Ropiha:* I will finish now what we had to say yesterday. Something, however, was omitted by my friends yesterday. I think some clear law should be set up with regard to the unworkable surveys that the Government have made of our lands. The Government have carried on surveys, and paid the cost of them, and then the Government wait for a couple of years to be recouped. Then, if the Government does not get refunded within the two years what they have paid for the survey, they cut off some portion of the land, and thus pay themselves. I think that the people who own the land should be the ones to order the survey, and the people so ordering should pay the cost of their own survey. I wish to say something also with regard to railways. A great deal of our money is ignorantly wasted in connection with these railways. There should be two sets of railway-tickets, one printed in English, and the other in Maori, so that the Natives would know what they have to pay. They may be charged 7s. or 9s., and they have no means at present of testing whether the proper charge is made or not. That is the reason why I think the fares chargeable should be put both in Maori and in English. Now, continuing this subject of the railway, four Natives in Hawke's Bay have been killed by it, and recently a Maori woman was killed by the railway, which seems to be managed differently in Hawke's Bay from the manner in which the railways are managed in other parts of the country. There is greater care taken here for the safety of sheep than for the security of human lives. I wish to speak of this subject, because in no other part of the country are the railways conducted as they are in Hawke's Bay, and I bring up this matter so that the Commissioners will be able to say something definite with regard to this question of the railways. This is all I have to say about that.

*Mr. Rees:* We have only a limited time at our disposal, and we want, therefore, to know whether the people who spoke yesterday, and who were to meet last night for consultation, are going to reply on the incidental questions?—They will follow me. I am the concluding person on this matter. There is another thing that I wish to refer to, and that is in relation to our young girls. They are frequently abducted, and married by the Registrar away out of their parents' sight. I think some law should be passed with reference to that matter. Notification should be given some six months before the marriage is to take place, so that the parents may know what is intended. I have also to state, with regard to the wills of deceased persons, that if a person prepares a will for another, no one in the hapu of the deceased should be any party to it, or write it. The leading chief of the hapu should see to it, and some Judge should be the witness. There should be no secrecy about it.

*Piripi Make:* The matter I desire to bring before the Commissioners is with regard to a block of land that was reserved. It was included in some land given to us. Maungaroa is the name of the block. There are three subdivisions of that block. One portion of it went to Mr. McLean, Campbell had another portion, and Watt the third. The arrangement with Watt was that he should return the Natives a portion of that which he bought, as a reserve; but we have not got that portion. We got our reserve out of Campbell's portion, but not out of Watt's.