

*alia* : “ It is considered that a reasonable way of meeting the situation would be to allow the lessees the valuation of improvements at the time the valuation is being made, and the Maoris would, I think, accept such an arrangement, *but whatever is finally agreed upon could be submitted to them for approval before the necessary legislative amendments are submitted for approval* ” (the italics are ours). As will have been already seen, the lessees were pressing for legislation during the then current session, and, unfortunately, their wishes prevailed.

61. On the 22nd October, 1935, Mr. Williams, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Houston, who had come to Wellington for the purpose, had a long conference at the Native Trustee's office as to the position generally, and in an endeavour to reach agreement. There were present Mr. Campbell (Native Trustee), Mr. King (his deputy), Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Houston. The Member of Parliament who had sent the telegram to the Prime Minister on the 19th October was also present. Mr. Houston says that the clause was carefully debated, and in the afternoon there was a meeting with the Prime Minister, there being present in addition to the Prime Minister, Messrs. Dickie, Wilkinson, Smith (three of the Taranaki Members of Parliament), Mr. Campbell, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Houston. It was arranged, says Mr. Houston, that they should place the whole matter before the Native Affairs Committee of the House and obtain their concurrence. The Prime Minister indicated that he was not prepared to move in the matter “ unless the Native Affairs Committee were in accordance with the proposals and prepared to support the same.” In the evening, says Mr. Houston, they met Sir Apirana Ngata and Mr. Taite te Tomo. There were present Messrs. Dickie, Wilkinson, Campbell, Robinson, and Houston. Mr. Houston says that he presented the case for the lessees in the same manner as he had presented it to the Prime Minister on the 26th September; that Mr. Campbell also spoke; and that Sir Apirana Ngata and Mr. Taite te Tomo said they would consider the matter.

62. Next day, says Mr. Houston, 23rd October, “ we again met the Prime Minister, who stated that the Native Affairs Committee had agreed to the amending clause.” (There must be some error here, as, according to the parliamentary records, the Bill was not referred to the Native Affairs Committee till the 24th. What Mr. Houston was told must have been that Sir Apirana Ngata and Mr. Taite te Tomo had agreed.) “ The basis of the clause amending the 1892 Act was finally agreed on. We were to see the Native Trustee and settle the final draft of the clause. Present on this occasion were Messrs. Dickie, Wilkinson, Williams, Robinson, and myself.” Mr. Houston proceeds: “ We then conferred with Mr. King at the Native Trustee's office. We considered and finally settled the draft clause. We then discussed the clause with Mr. Campbell, and he approved. He was to send the clause to the House forthwith, first obtaining the approval of Mr. Dykes, the solicitor to the Native Trust Office. Present on this occasion were Messrs. King, Campbell, Williams, Robinson, and myself.”

63. Later on the same day, according to Mr. Houston, he and Mr. Robinson went to the House and met Messrs. Dickie and Wilkinson. “ Mr. Dickie obtained Sir Apirana Ngata's approval of the clause as drafted. Mr. Dickie went alone to Sir Apirana Ngata's room for this purpose.” On the 26th October, 1935, the Native Purposes Act was passed including section 19, which is the section dealing with these reserves.

64. We cannot avoid saying that, in our view, there could not have been a more unfortunate or a more perfunctory method of dealing with an important matter of this kind vitally affecting the interests of the beneficial owners; and we emphasize that from first to last the beneficial owners were not consulted, not advised in any way whatever of what was being done or what was proposed, and never given any opportunity whatsoever of being heard by way of objection or protest, although the Native Trustee had mentioned the matter of the Natives being consulted in his letter of the 12th September, to which reference has already been made.