In the Maori Land Court of New Zealand (Tairawhiti District).—In the matter of the Maori Land Act, 1931, and of section 13 of the Maori Purposes Act, 1944: and in the matter of the land known as Mangatu Nos. 1 and 4 Blocks and of a petition No. 9 of 1944, of Turuhira Hinetoia and another referred to the Court for inquiry.

AT a sitting of the Court held at Gisborne on the 12th day of March, 1948, before David Gordon Bruce Morison, Esquire, Chief Judge, and Ivor Prichard, Esquire, Judge.

The Court reports that:—

The petitioners, and persons adversely affected by the claims of the petitioners, were represented before the Court.

In 1881 the Maori Land Court investigated the title to the Mangatu Block, a large block containing approximately 160,000 acres. On this investigation the block was subdivided into several portions, including Mangatu No. 1, containing approximately 100,000 acres, and Mangatu No. 4, containing approximately 6,000 acres. The order on investigation for Mangatu No. 1 was made in the names of twelve trustees, and the names of the persons claimed to be the beneficial owners were recorded in the minute-book. An order was made for Mangatu No. 4 in which the names of the beneficial owners were set out.

By the Mangatu No. 1 Empowering Act, 1893, it was declared that the persons set out in the Schedule to the Act and the successors according to Maori custom of those who had died since the 30th April, 1881, were the owners of Mangatu No. 1. The persons set out in the Schedule appear to be the persons whose names were recorded in the minute-book in 1881.

In 1917, as a result of a petition to Parliament, the Maori Land Court was empowered to inquire and determine what members of the Whanau-a-Taupara Hapu were entitled to be declared to be Maori owners of the Mangatu No. 1 Block and the Mangatu No. 4 Block in addition to the owners declared by the Mangatu No. 1 Empowering Act, 1893, and as to the Mangatu No. 4 Block in addition to the owners set out in the order of 1881.

Proceedings upon this inquiry extended from 1918 to 1922 before the Maori Land Court and the Maori Appellate Court. In these proceedings the Court first of all determined that certain persons of the Whanau-a-Taupara were entitled to be included as owners in Mangatu Nos. 1 and 4. The Court then determined the total number of shares which the original owners as a group, and these new owners as a group, should be entitled to respectively. The Court then proceeded to allot the relative shares to the individual owners within each group.

Early in the proceedings a representative committee was formed to settle the lists of owners for submission to the Court and the relative shares to be awarded. The operations of the committee extended over a lengthy period, and the evidence before this Court showed that persons claiming to be admitted had an opportunity of presenting their claims to the committee.

The claims under these various lists were in due course put before the Court; the Court adopted the usual practice of hearing argument for and objections, if any, against the various lists before giving its decision.

There were appeals against the Court's decision on some of the lists, and when these had been disposed of, the owners and their relative shares became finally determined in the year 1922.

The petition is really the petition of Alex Curtis, who is disappointed over not the number of shares his wife, Hinetera Ruru Curtis, now holds, but the number she obtained under the will of Hohepa Tahataha.

The question is one of whether the shares in the 1922 order should, as regards the Whanau-a-Taupara, be allotted as drawn up by the committee and approved by the Court, or whether they should be divided *per stirpes*.