

with the Chief Judge of the Maori Land Court. Proceedings were also brought by some of the owners against Seymour in respect of the lease. The result of these various proceedings was that the sale was held to be void and Seymour retained the lease.

(8) The sale to Seymour was made the subject of an inquiry by the Commissioners appointed under section 20 of the Maori Land Courts Act Amendment Act, 1889. Following this inquiry an agreement between the Maori owners and Seymour was executed, which purported to settle all the matters in dispute between the parties. Legislation was drafted to give effect to this agreement, but was not passed. The whole matter was later dealt with by the Validation Court in 1894 and 1896. It is principally the decision of this Court which is called in question by the petitioners.

(9) In the proceedings before the Validation Court the Court was asked to give effect to the terms of the agreement between the Maori owners and Seymour above referred to. The first step was to deal with the lease and the sale to Seymour; on the 6th September, 1894, the Court pronounced judgment approving a decree under which Seymour was to be awarded an area of 4,500 acres of freehold which was calculated to represent the value of the interests purchased together with various legal and other costs and expenses and costs of survey which it was agreed should be borne by the Maori owners. Seymour was also awarded a leasehold interest in an area of 3,900 acres.

(10) The Court having pronounced that these decrees would be made the judgment of the Court, then went on to state the further matters which would have to be dealt with, as follows :—

The Natives have, on the other hand, now got a good unencumbered title to the rest of the block equal to 16,950 acres to lease or dispose the unleased portion of it as may be deemed advisable.

But much has yet to be done by the Court before the Native portion can be utilized in the hands of its owners. We have to find out the ownership not only as between the non-sellers in respect of their lands, but also we have to find out the lands to be treated as reserves for all Natives and the shares in these reserves of the Natives who sold to Mr. Seymour, and we have also to ascertain who are the owners of the 3,900 acres of land now leased by this Court's order to Mr. Seymour under the arrangements now made by the Court. This will take probably much time and arrangement between the Native owners and the Court, but meantime the rent of the lease to Mr. Seymour must be paid to somebody as receiver for these as yet unascertained lessors, and the Court must be open for further decrees to be made settling all these necessarily postponed matters and also to sanction the future arrangements as to utilization of the Native portion of the land, whether for leasing selling or as Native reserves.

(11) The matter did not come before the Court again until April, 1896, when proceedings were commenced to dispose of the matters referred to in the judgment just referred to. These proceedings continued with adjournments until August, 1896, when all matters outstanding were finally disposed of.

(12) At the opening of these proceedings on 22nd April, 1896, the following statements were made by the various counsel and conductors :—

*Mr. Lysnar* : All the Natives are here except one section, and arrangements have been partly completed. Lists have been prepared by the Natives.

*Mr. Rees* : I have not seen these lists, and I cannot allow my clients to be bound by anything until I have considered it.

*Mr. E. F. Harris* : The Natives have divided the block into eight portions, and have settled the ancestors for each portion, but from what he had seen some of the ancestors are spurious and some have been awarded large shares who are not entitled to large shares. I think the Natives should make another attempt to settle the question more satisfactorily. It was good that the Natives had made a start, but the result of their labours so far was not good.

*Rawiri Karaha* : Seven subdivisions have been arranged, but the shares in the eighth have not been settled. It will take two or three weeks to settle the matter.

*Hapi Hinaki* : Stated that the arrangements as to the seven subdivisions had been made by the Committee of Whangara, with the knowledge and consent of the owners. There were no objectors. As to the eighth subdivision, it was a subject of conflict and would have to be settled by the Court. He asked that names and shares of the seven subdivisions might be settled now.