141. In preference to the suggestion of Sir William Russell that competent business-men should be placed in charge there?—Yes.

142. You are aware, also, with this Bill becoming law as it is now, that the lands are handed over to the Council: they become for ever the property of the Council?—Subject to all rights and equities of the mortgagees.

143. Subject to the whole rights of the mortgagees?—With all the rights and equities preserved—the existing rights and equities preserved.

144. You propose to ask the Validation Court to take in a number of other lands, possibly, as security—lands in the Registrar's District at Gisborne: you propose to do that?—Yes, subject to the approval of the Validation Court.

145. That is, the Council would ask the Validation Court to do it. This is for the Maoris and two Europeans?—The owners themselves can apply to the Validation Court and ask its authority and approval to any proposal which might be in aid of the other lands.

146. If the Validation Court agree to that, they all go into the hands of this Council?—Yes.

147. *The Chairman.*] And become part of the security too?—Oh, no. The bank has nothing to do with that. The Natives in their efforts to relieve some of those blocks may require additional security. The owners of those blocks think it should be left to the Validation Court to approve or otherwise. The owners should be able to go to the Court and say "We want additional security to enable us to raise money to pay the bank off." If the Validation Court approved of that it would give its consent.

148. Where is the power in the Validation of Titles Act from 1892 upwards to the present for the Court to inquire into matters of this kind? Is there any power to interfere if other lands should be included in the security? Is not this the Amendment Act of the Validation Titles Act?—The power is preserved in the Validation Court decrees.

149. Are you certain of this?—Well, take Mungapoiki. That was brought before the Validation Court, and the Validation Court appointed trustees to administer that land, but at the same time kept its right of vetoing any act of administration that it would not approve of. We would have to come back to the Validation Court at any time and ask for special powers if we wanted to do anything further.

150. You speak about other trustees holding other lands?—Wi Pere and myself and other Natives and Jackson are trustees in other lands.

151. I suppose the trustees in those other blocks are as unsatisfactory as in this?—No, very successful.

152. Then why the necessity to hand it over to the Council?—Because the Council is a statutory body, and is representing all the East Coast Natives and the Natives and lands, and the object is to work all those lands together.

153. Then you are prepared to take it from trustees who have administered it as a competent body and hand it over to a body who may possibly be an incompetent body?—Well, for the broader purposes I have every confidence in the body—the Native Council.

154. *Mr. W. Fraser.*] At whose request is the Council substituted in the Bill for the trustees, was it the request of the beneficiaries or the request of the bank?—The bank and the trustees, on behalf of the beneficiaries, have discussed the position, and it was taken that the Council would be a satisfactory body.

155. Then, it is really at the beneficiaries' request that the word "Council" is put in?—Yes, the trustees and beneficiaries together.

156. When you say you think it would be better that a statutory body like that should be left to control the liquidation of this matter, you say so because it has been so asked by the beneficiaries?—That is so.

157. If Parliament were to interfere and inquire into this, would not Parliament be assuming a certain responsibility if anything went wrong?—It is now the proposition to do so in order to meet the views of the Natives.

158. How was the opinion of the beneficiaries obtained?—Well, the trustees are in constant communication with all the principal owners.

159. Then, it is your opinion, if the word "Council" be left in the Bill, it will meet with the wishes and desires of the beneficiaries?—I think so. Of course, I told them it was understood that the present trustees should go out. I do not think it right for myself to be in, considering my position. They wish us to remain in. I told them I had strong reasons for going out of the trust. Of course, they were public reasons.

160. Is this the first time that the bank has consented to an extension of time?—No.

161. On what other occasion?—I cannot tell you exactly.

162. Was it in 1895?—Yes.

163. What extension was given then?—Three or four years. I know the bank has met our wishes before.

164. No result having accrued to the bank, is it not natural that the bank now, in giving a further extension, should require finality?—That is essential, otherwise there is no use of carrying out what we propose now. Finality is the great essential in all these things—in litigation and everything else.

165. You referred to the fact of this Bill making the titles better both for the bank and for the trustees?—Yes.

166. Is it not a fact that the title the bank holds is an absolute title, and was decreed by the Courts?—I do not question that; but you cannot satisfy the public mind that it is so—that we found out. Whenever we attempted to raise money to pay off the mortgage the question was always made, "Oh, what are your titles?"

167. Is it not a fact, in section 4, where the title of the bank is dealt with, there is not the question there of giving the title to the bank, but simply the question of preventing annoying