

is but one way, and I heard you speak about it in the House the other day, Mr. Parata—that is, subdivision, and let them go and live on the land. That is our feeling. I heard you say that in the House the other day.

13. Do you think if the land was subdivided it would improve the condition of the Maoris here and in the South Island?—I am speaking about my own part.

14. Well, take your district?—Yes, I do think so. Many have started milking; but owing to the insufficiency of the land they have had to give it up. You know my own family—every one of them is able to work. They have never applied for anything, because, as far as they are concerned, they are not under the Public Trustee. On the Chatham Islands, Inia, my nephew, has a farm which is a credit to anybody. My nephew, Dr. Pomare, has an interest in the land referred to in my petition. Practically in a few years those three little reserves that I have spoken of must come back to our family. My sister's, my own, and Dr. Pomare's children must get this land. As I have asked in my last petition and the present petition, remove the Public Trustee's influence. I think the Committee will see the consistency of both of my petitions, last year's petition and this year's one. I think the Committee will see it is consistent with my prayer.

15. *The Chairman.*] You have put in a statement of accounts here from the Commissioner of Taxes, which reads, "Received from Mrs. Jane Brown, £17 7s. 7d.; Mr. H. and Mrs. Jane Brown, £6 8s. 1d.; and Mrs. L. Turnbull, £6 8s. 6d.: total, £30 4s. 2d." Who paid this tax direct?—My husband. My daughter, Mrs. Turnbull, is a widow; she pays her share, and it is all put into the one cheque.

16. Are these all paid through the Public Trustee now?—No. They are on land and mortgages which I hold; these receipts will show.

17. You say some of these persons were put upon this land illegally. Was it at the discrimination of the Court that these persons were put on?—No. It was simply a list taken by somebody there and sent in to the Commissioner while they were there. No Court was held. That was the ground of my objection to Judge Edgar's award. I wanted a Court to show that they were not the right owners. While Sir William Fox was there sitting for a week, the list of these people's names was sent in to him to show how many people were living in the village. They took that and put all these interests into the grant as owners of the land; there was no Court sitting.

18. Have you any power to ask for a sitting of the Court to decide that?—I could not say. That was my wish, that there should be. There were Natives from Waikato, Bay of Islands, and from all over the place—some are kanakas and some are Ngatitooa. That is why I applied for the Appellate Court to make the difference in the original order.

19. *Mr. Parata.*] Then, as to these people put in that lease. The Commissioners never made any inquiry as to whether they had any right or not?—No; and these are the people that are helped by the Public Trustee's agents. I do not think Mr. Poynton knows half of what his Agent does. These are the people that are made use of against us.

20. *Mr. Wi Pere.*] Has the Public Trustee never inquired into the matter?—I cannot tell you.

The Chairman: Mr. Poynton, you have heard Mrs. Brown's statement. I presume you want to make some remarks?

Mr. J. W. POYNTON'S (Public Trustee) Statement. (No. 8.)

Mr. Chairman, this land is in exactly the same position as all other reserves on the West Coast. It is under the control of the Public Trust Office, and no one has any right in it at all by law—that is, to lease it or deal with it. With reference to the supposed promise or alleged promise that was made: that it was to be held by a few Natives, without any control by the office—well, that is a very shadowy basis on which to alter the present law. Sir William Fox, who drew up the list of these reserves, had the assistance of Major Parris throughout his investigations, and rightly said in his report that every promise made to the Natives was investigated and carried out. To alter the title at the present time, so many years after the decision of the Commissioner, would, in my opinion, be an act of folly. It would give rise to hundreds of other alleged promises, and throw the whole of the policy of administration of these reserves into confusion. The petitioner does not live on this reserve at all. She has not lived on it for many years. She said that she received a promise from me that the arrangement with Greenwood would not be disturbed. I have no recollection of any such understanding with the petitioner, but do not wish to contradict her. Whatever took place in respect of such an understanding has passed unaccountably from my memory. It is my custom, when any undertaking is given, to put a minute of it on the office file relating to the subject. No such minute was made of the interview with Mrs. Brown. My first clear knowledge that Mrs. Brown had improperly leased a portion of this reserve to a European was on receipt of a letter from the Agent, dated the 7th November, 1903. In that letter he stated, when going over the land he found that Mr. F. C. Greenwood, of Urenui, was occupying some 54 acres of it, and he informed me that he held it under a lease granted by Mrs. Brown. I somewhat doubted this statement as I felt Mrs. Brown would hardly have given a documentary title knowing the position of this land. The impression then in my mind was that the whole transaction or the whole thing revealed a piece of consummate hypocrisy. Mrs. Brown had previously taken up a good deal of my time and also of that of the Committee in protesting about any of this land being leased to Europeans, and it was shown that she herself had been drawing rents all the time from a lease of a considerable portion of it. I may say that on the file it appeared that Mrs. Brown was entitled to only twenty shares; and, having let 54 acres, and some of that the best of the reserve, I was very indignant that she was taking more than her share out of this reserve, in addition to improperly dealing with it. Mrs. Brown saw me afterwards and explained that she held more shares than appeared on the records. On her explanation I agreed with her to let the matter stand over until I went to Urenui. I was unwilling to disturb Greenwood; and then, believing that Mrs. Brown was not drawing more than her share, I thought it better to let the matter stand over. We then went, as Mrs. Brown stated, to Urenui, and the result of the consultation and consideration there was that she should continue to