

12. This is the question I wish to put to you : Your interest has not been partitioned by the Native Land Court?—No, not my own. I hold it with others. But the Public Trustee has located my own away from the others—

13. Oh, yes. But that was a partition for yourself and others?—Yes.

14. And since then, you say, the Public Trustee has partitioned your individual portion off?—Yes.

15. Are you occupying this land yourself?—Yes, I am occupying it myself.

16. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] That is the land leased to you?—It is my own land. I had to get the lease out to protect myself from trespassers. I could not get any title to produce in Court. Some persons destroyed trees on this land, and I could not bring the case on because I had no proper title.

17. The land which you hold under lease, you say, is your own interest allocated to you by the Court?—It is my share.

18. Did the Court award that piece to you?—Yes, the Court awarded that piece to me.

19. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] What Mr. Carroll means is this : Did the Court partition this portion off to you alone? You told us a few moments ago that it did not, and in answer to Mr. Carroll you should have said "No." The Court did not partition off that piece for you alone?—No, it was done by the Public Trustee.

20. The real gist of your petition is that you feel that you are competent to manage your own affairs and your own land?—Yes, so I am.

21. And you ask in your petition that legislation should be brought down to free you from the burden of the Public Trustee's management?—Yes.

22. Have you any other complaint beyond the complaints you have made in your petition with regard to the management of the West Coast lands by the Public Trustee?—Well, when he issued a new lease to the tenant on the land in the lease under his control, and the tenant had not the money to pay for the improvements, the Public Trustee lent him the money—

23. The land was leased to a European by the Public Trustee?—Yes. Tenants occupying such land have the right of renewal at the end of their term on paying down the value of the improvements.

24. At the termination of a lease, if they wish for a renewal, they have to pay for the improvements on the land before the new lease is signed?—Yes.

25. A new lease was signed?—Yes; and this tenant had not the money to pay for these improvements, so the Public Trustee lent him the money and charged the interest to me.

26. The tenant, when getting a renewal of the lease, was unable to pay for the improvements. The Public Trustee lent him the money to pay for them and charged you with the interest?—Yes, and I have to pay taxes and rates and commissions of all sorts as well.

27. What is the total amount you are entitled to without deducting any rates, taxes, or commission?—It is given in this statement of account by the Public Trustee.

28. The total amount here is set down at £80 7s. 7d., and from this is deducted valuation fee 3s. 6d., rates £2 2s. 10d., taxes £5 5s. 10d., and commission £4 4s. 1d., making a total reduction of £12 16s. 3d., which leaves a balance of £67 11s. 4d. That is the total for the year. Now, Mrs. Thompson, if you had the land in your own hands would you not still have to pay these rates?—I would not complain about paying rates because I know they would benefit my place. I do not know what the tax is used for.

29. But you do object to paying £4 4s. 1d. commission when you could manage better yourself?—Yes.

30. Have you anything else to put before the Committee?—Only this account. When the new lease was issued to the tenant this account was sent to me. [Document produced.]

31. This is with respect to the renewal of the lease you spoke of a few minutes ago, and this is the Public Trustee's account to you?—Yes.

32. This account reads "Grant 3952, No. 2.—Kuini Rangipupu and Others—To rent under C lease from 12th June, 1897, for 85 days, £15 14s. 4d.; to rent under new lease from 6th September, 1897, to 6th March, 1900, 2½ years, at £113 15s. per annum, £284 7s. 6d.; to interest on mortgage for improvements, £384 5s. at 5 per cent. per annum from 6th September, 1897, to 6th September, 1899, 2 years, £38 8s. 6d.; less proportion cost of tracing, £1; land-tax, 1897-98, 17s. 2d.; ditto, 1898-99, £1 8s. 5d.; ditto, 1899-1900, £1 8s. 5d.; valuation fee, £1 1s.; commission Public Trust Office, £22 9s. 7d.; balance, £310 5s. 9d., less amount distributed, 30/6/99, £143 17s. 2d.; amount for distribution on 31/12/99, £166 8s. 7d." Is there anything else you would like to say, Mrs. Thompson?—I have also shares in other land to which I have succeeded. Some of my land is shown on this map [Map produced], but I have other land as well. All these lands are under the management of the Public Trustee, and I cannot give you the different particulars because I cannot get them. I have often asked for accounts when the agent comes round to pay the rents, but he merely tells me "Your interest in certain grants is so much," and I sign a voucher, but I have no account.

33. Can you tell the Committee what the general impression is among Maoris about the management of the Public Trust Department with regard to the lands on the West Coast—

*The Chairman :* I do not think that question should be put.

34. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] Well, what is your own opinion?—The Natives of the West Coast have come to the conclusion that the Public Trust Office is a money-making machine for the Government, and that they bleed the Natives more than people think. They are getting more money out of the Natives than they should.

35. In your opinion that is the general feeling?—Yes.

36. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] Whose opinion is that?—The Natives of the West Coast.

37. How many?—Several of them.

38. You do not know the number?—No.

39. In your opinion that is the general feeling?—That is what they say.