

4. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] Whereabouts is this land?—It is a reserve at Hapotiki, near Hawera. It was originally one large grant, but the Natives divided, and Mrs. Thompson and several others took a smaller grant. It was then divided into two. I am speaking of the first one.

5. Why I asked was because the rentals seemed low for good land?—These are Mrs. Thompson's interests, but the other Natives may die, and she may get the land again. Still, the interests had to be kept separate because they may go to other Natives. Interest No. 29—these are all in the same grant—is seven twenty-fourths of $11\frac{1}{2}$ shares, representing 3 acres 1 rood 16 perches, and the half-yearly rent being 9s. 7d. Interest No. 33, seven twenty-fourths of twenty-three shares, 6 acres 2 roods 33 perches; half-yearly rent 19s. 2d. The total interest in No. 3952 is 33 acres 1 rood 9 perches, out of 4,174 acres. She has then in Grant 3954, Ngatihawe, one-half of ten shares—five, out of 2,047 acres. The rent of that is 8s. 7d. half-yearly. Her next interest is in Grant 3922, Mataikahawai, and is one-half of seven-twelfths of seventy shares, representing 20 acres 1 rood 16 perches out of 2,463 acres, and the half-yearly rent being 18s. 4d. Mrs. Thompson has a small interest in Polhill Gully here, but those are all her interests in the West Coast Reserves.

6. *Mr. Heke.*] Would you mind giving us the total yearly rentals Mrs. Thompson gets?—It comes to close on £70, but of course the deduction has to be made from that.

7. You deduct $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. from the major portion of this £70?—Yes.

8. With the exception of £16 4s., I think?—£16 4s. is the amount due under her lease. The net amount she receives is £50-odd.

9. One thing that strikes me as being peculiar is the office asking Mrs. Thompson to pay rent for an area of her own land?—It would not be fair to the other Natives interested, and who are absent, if she did not. That is the difficulty.

10. I understand the position to be that you ask Mrs. Thompson to pay rent for 40 acres of the $112\frac{1}{2}$ shares—to pay rent for her own land?—But she has an interest in the other portions of the area. If she got the 40 acres free it would not be fair to the other Natives at all, because she would be getting her share of the rent from the other portion of the land, and would not be paying rent for the portion she occupied.

11. *The Chairman.*] Are there any other interests in this portion that she lives on?—It is a part of the block.

12. I understand from you that Mrs. Thompson's interest has been individualised to a certain extent—that this 40 acres has been cut off for her—and on that you ask her to pay £16 4s. for rent. Does any other Native benefit by that £16 4s.?—The others get it.

13. Why should they get it if they have no interest in it?—That is not so; all have an interest in it as well as she.

14. But I thought this area was set apart specially for her?—No. First of all it was occupied by her under an occupation license. The rent then was the same as it is now. At Mrs. Thompson's request the occupation license was changed to a lease.

15. I understood from the documents you produced here, including the lease, that it was specially given to Mrs. Thompson and not to any other Natives?—That is what I say—it was an occupation license, but she converted it into a lease.

16. To her alone?—Yes.

17. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] If the Public Trustee's services in administering the land were disposed of, who would it belong to?—The Natives.

18. They are all interested in the 40 acres?—It is not individual property.

19. *Mr. Heke.*] Do I understand the position, then, to be this: Although Mrs. Thompson owns $112\frac{1}{2}$ shares, she is holding those shares in common with others?—Yes.

20. In a larger block?—Yes.

21. The $112\frac{1}{2}$ shares are still a part of the larger block?—Yes.

22. Not subdivided?—No. The title is different from that of other Native reserves, and it is difficult to make it understood; but the thing is like a partnership. In a partnership one partner may hold two-thirds of the shares and the other one-third.

23. Out of 300 shares Mrs. Thompson holds $112\frac{1}{2}$?—Yes.

24. But these shares are not subdivided into individual rights?—No; she has that interest in the total rent. If she likes to take a portion of that land on an occupation license, or, as she has done, being more advanced than the others, take a perpetual lease, she must pay rent for it. But that represents part of her interest in the block.

25. I wanted to get a clear understanding on that point, because I was under the impression that the shares were subdivided and a separate title had been issued?—No. As I say in the report, when the Natives want to occupy a portion of the land they arrange to do so, and of course it would not be fair to those who were absent if those Natives who were utilising the land did not pay rent. Those occupying the land must of course pay rent.

26. *The Chairman.*] Do any of the other Natives get a share of the £16 that Mrs. Thompson pays for this 40 acres?—Yes; it is divided amongst the others as well as Mrs. Thompson, according to their shares.

27. Then you must charge her $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the £16?—No.

28. That appears not to be dealing fairly with the other Natives?—Only two of these Natives have availed themselves of the Act of 1893, which gives them power to convert an occupation license into a lease—only two out of about three hundred. We do not charge them anything, but the other lands held under occupation license we charge $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for administering.

29. Then the other Natives derive the same benefit from this piece of land that Mrs. Thompson lives on as she herself does, as far as rent is concerned?—Yes.

30. *Mr. Heke.*] In arranging with the Natives to allow them an occupation license, how do you