

assess the value of the land?—That is settled between the agents and the Natives themselves. There is no competition. If there were, a white man might come along and offer more, or one of the Natives might pay more than another. I believe the Natives really give less than Europeans would. As I say, as far as possible the matter is arranged between the Natives and the agents; and I have had no complaints from the Natives about excessive rents.

31. What are your rates with regard to occupation licenses, where the Natives, after getting the licenses, do not use the land, but make private leases or sell the grazing-rights to Europeans?—We do not approve of it, because the object was not to allow some of the Natives to make these private leases and get rents from Europeans, and do the other Natives out of the money. Our idea was to settle the Natives on the land themselves, so that they would become industrious farmers.

32. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] You speak of the Natives who get the occupation leases doing the others out of the money they receive. Do they not have to pay rent for the land?—No, not as much as they get. A Native will give us 5s. an acre, and instead of settling down on the land he will let it to a European for 10s. an acre.

33. But the owners get their 5s. an acre distributed?—Yes, but this Native gets more than his share.

34. *Mr. Heke.*] Have you had occasion to cancel any of the occupation licenses issued to any of the Natives?—I can only remember two cases. In one case the license was cancelled, I think, because the holder persisted in doing the other Natives out of their rent, and in the other case because the holder refused to keep the land free from gorse and blackberries. I may say that we are in trouble with the local bodies through the same thing. They claim full rates when the land is leased to Europeans. They say, "Well, this Native is not using it. He has been away at Parihaka for the last six months, and there is a European running his cattle over the land. Why should it not pay full rates?"

35. Do I understand, then, that a Native who gets an occupation license from you may do other Natives, owning in common, out of their share of the money, because he gets a lease of the area under occupation license at a reasonable rate, as arranged between himself and your agent, and takes advantage of that by leasing the land to Europeans for a greater rent than he pays?—Yes. Evidently that man does not want the land for his own use, or he would not let it. In the second place, the land is of more value than the rent he is paying to the other Natives. Therefore he is doing the other Natives out of that which is their right.

36. You are not exercising any rights at all in regard to the cancellation of such occupation licenses as are used in this way?—We will do it. In fairness to the other Natives we ought to, so as to let them get the increased rent. The whole object of the occupation licenses was to encourage the Natives to be industrious and to give them protection for their individual efforts. But the system is being abused by men not doing that, but wandering over the country and letting the land to Europeans.

37. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] *Mr. Wi Pere* asked you a question the other day the object of which was to elicit your opinion with regard to the Natives managing their own affairs in the leasing of these lands. I will read you the question and your answer: "Well, now, do you not think that if these grants were handed back to the Natives to administer themselves, and they were put up to auction and so on—do you mean to say that these conditions would still apply?—Yes. I say, instead of paying £6 16s. they would have to pay fully £40. I have not the slightest doubt about that." That was on account of the expense of getting the lease?—I wish to explain that matter to *Mr. Wi Pere* and also to the Committee. I do not want him to misunderstand me. Forty pounds commission would not have to be paid, but the man to whom the land was leased would pay that much less. *Mr. Wi Pere* asked me as to the amount the Natives got out of every £100 received. I told him £93 4s., and said that instead of getting that I did not think the Natives would get above £60 if the Natives administered the lands themselves. I will explain to *Mr. Wi Pere*. He evidently does not understand the difficulty we have in these matters, and I think I will convince him that what I am saying is correct. I will give an example of one grant. I have not picked it out purposely; the file in connection with it was lying on my table the other day when I returned to the office from this Committee. It will give an idea of what we have to do in these matters. It is Grant No. 4040, containing 175 acres. The first dealing with it was this: Some of the Natives wished us to lease the land. Inquiries were made by the Native agent as to whether the Natives desired to have some of it for occupation. This led to correspondence with the intending lessees, and to the writing of letters by other Natives objecting to the leasing. Inquiries had to be made, and it was ascertained that these Natives who were objecting had no interest in the grant. It was then decided to call for tenders, and the advertising had to be seen to and the gazetting. After this, tenders were received, and the highest accepted. A lease had then to be prepared, and at that stage a question cropped up as to a burial-ground. Some of the Natives had then discovered that there was an old burial-ground with old graves on a certain portion of the reserve. A reserve of 5 acres had consequently to be made, and, of course, new arrangements had to be made with the tenant; he demanded a reduction of his rent on account of these 5 acres being reserved. This difficulty was got over, when the tenant discovered that he could do much better with a subdivision of his lease by giving 35 acres to another European. There was no objection to this, and two leases were prepared. Having leased the land, rates were paid, and an application was made by the office to the Native Land Court to ascertain the owners. All the papers in connection with this matter were, of course, drafted by the office free of any charge. The Court decided the ownership, the office being represented at the hearing, and bringing all the facts before the Court to assist it. The decision was that there were 196 Natives interested in this block of 175 acres. The next development was a long complaint to the Minister of Native Affairs, the office being accused of having betrayed the interests of a lot of these Natives by putting Natives who had no right into the block. A report had to be obtained from the Reserves Agent, the Native Minister had to be communicated with, and further correspondence took place with the Natives complaining, it being pointed out that this had nothing to do with the office at all, that it was a