

come here and complain, but I think that is only a very small proportion. We have 303 of these occupation licenses, and I do not think the holders of a dozen are complaining.

107. Your opinion is this, that if a Native wishes to live on the land and farm it, he is far better off by taking a select piece under occupation license than he would be by trying to consolidate his interest in any particular part of the district?—He would be in the same position. It would cost him, I do not know how much more, if he had to go and get titles.

108. *Mr. Kaihau.*] I think the Public Trustee, in his statement the other day, mentioned the entire area of Native land under his control. I forget exactly what the area was?—The area leased was mentioned. The total area under the control of the Public Trustee is about 186,000 acres—it is between 180,000 and 190,000. It was originally 200,000, but some blocks were lost through rascality.

109. What I want to get at is the total area under your control, whether leased or not leased. It is between 180,000 and 190,000 acres?—Yes.

110. Do I understand that you have valued the whole of this area?—Yes. Some is far back and has no roads to it, and is of very little value at present.

111. Can you say what the total area of this land is that you have now under lease?—Yes; 148,712 acres under lease and occupation license.

112. Supposing the Government saw their way to bring in a Bill to allow Mrs. Thompson and others in a similar position the administration of their own affairs, as they pray, would the Public Trustee object to that?—He cannot object to Parliament passing Bills.

113. What I mean to say is that, as the Public Trustee must recognise that the trouble between himself and the Natives whose estates he is administering is increasing year by year, I should take it he would not object to a Bill being brought in to remove all these difficulties?—The trouble is decreasing year by year. There is much less trouble than there was some years ago.

114. If, as you say, the difficulties are getting less and less every year, why do you not reduce the charges so as to make them less and less every year?—Because the present charges are no more than sufficient to pay the expenses of the office in connection with the administration.

115. Can you state the total amount of rent that you receive for the 148,000 acres which you have leased, and the total amount that you deduct from these rents before paying them over to the Maoris?—Yes. The total amount of rent is £20,977 from Europeans, and £4,819 from occupation licenses. The total deductions from these two items are £1,766 8s. 9d.

116. Does any part of these deductions come from the balance of the land which, although valued, is as yet unleased?—No; we do not deduct for what we have not got.

117. In your opinion, does this £1,766 8s. 9d., which is deducted year by year, pay your Department for the cost of administration?—No. It pays about the cost, but it does not provide anything for risks. We have losses—we must have.

*Mrs. Thompson:* To show you how we suffer under present arrangements, Mr. Chairman, I want to put in this telegram, dated the 29th August: “Mrs. R. S. Thompson, Wellington Hotel, Wellington. —Bailey interfering with us Ngawini’s land.—FRED. FANTHAM.”

*Mr. Poynton:* That has not come to our knowledge. Bailey’s actions have nothing to do with us.

*Mr. Field:* Does that refer to land under your control, Mr. Poynton?

*Mr. Poynton:* I could not say. I never heard of this before.

*Mrs. Thompson:* This man Bailey referred to in the telegram is a companion of the Reserves Agent—the Public Trustee’s officer up in the district—and always goes round with him.

*Mr. Poynton:* No; he does not always go round with the Agent. I can deny that emphatically.

*Mr. Parata:* Why does he interfere?

*Mr. Poynton:* I do not know anything about this at all. It is quite foreign to me. Bailey has no authority to interfere with the Natives. He is doing it without our authority.

*Mrs. Thompson:* This man Bailey continually goes round with Mr. Fisher and witnesses payments.

*The Chairman:* Is he a J.P.?

*Mr. Poynton:* He is a Native interpreter.

*Mrs. Thompson:* He has recently been made a J.P. by the Government. These are the people that the Government make J.P.’s of—these people who go about and cause trouble among the Natives. He (Bailey) continually advances moneys to the Natives on their rents, and attends when the rents are being paid by the Agent, and he gets from the Natives the cheques the Public Trustee pays them. And this is done in the presence of Mr. Fisher.

*The Chairman:* Without going into the matter at length, Mrs. Thompson, I think it would be better for you to bring it directly under the notice of the Public Trustee, and he will make inquiries and find out whether this is correct or otherwise. If these are only reports, you cannot expect the Public Trustee to answer whether they are correct or not, right away.

*Mrs. Thompson:* Very well. Tutange and myself have already placed the matter before the Public Trustee and the Minister. In regard to what has been stated about my lease, the Public Trustee’s agent said to me when my lease was drawn up that he would not take from me the £16 payable for the land that I occupy—my kainga—but that that would be merely mentioned in the lease. He said that it would not be deducted from my moneys or collected from me; but that the provision had to be inserted in the lease because it was necessary it should be there. He said that if I died and left the land, which was the subject of this lease, to some other person than a near relative of my own, then they would demand and collect this £16. But in spite of all this, I now see that this £16 has been deducted from my lease-moneys. I see it stated in the account. That is to say, I have never been paid this £16. The Public Trustee’s officer told me, as I have said, that they would not deduct this £16, but that I would have to pay commission on that £16, the same as is charged by them for collecting rents from Europeans. My husband was standing by my side when the officer said this to me, and I say that