

9. Well, would you require a room double that size?—I should want it to be three times as large. The public have to go into that room to search, and sometimes there are as many as eight or nine people there.

10. At present you have a room 36 ft. by 15 ft., which gives you 540 ft. of floor-area, and you want three times that: you would want a room of about 1,620 square feet of floor-area?—Yes. At present we have everywhere people searching titles, and they may abstract titles against themselves, and we have not a chance of watching them. We have lost some titles.

11. Now that only refers to the strong-room?—Yes.

12. Then, how many rooms or offices do you want in connection therewith: I suppose you want all the offices together?—We have to have one room for the Registrar, and there should be a room for myself. At the present time Mr. Sheridan and myself share a room. The Judges want a room independent of mine, and then there should be one long room for all the clerks.

13. Then, do you want a waiting-room for witnesses or anything like that for persons in attendance?—We have not got a Court-room or anything else. We want a Court-room.

14. Of what size?—About four times as big as this room. Sometimes there are as many as eighty or ninety Maoris present at the one time.

15. And you want a room about 60 ft. long and 30 ft. wide?—Yes.

16. And you want a witnesses' room?—Yes.

17. And Councils' room?—At the present time the Council sits in the office. The Board could sit in the Court-room, but at present the Councils have no room and they want an office. The Maori Boards have also no office.

18. You want a separate room for the Maori Boards?—Yes, and clerks' room for the Board and Councils' room.

19. Any more?—We should also require a room for the Land Purchase Department, and then another room for the interpreters.

20. Then altogether you want a strong-room, Registrar's room, Chief Judge's room, Mr. Sheridan's room, Judges' room, clerks' room, witnesses' room, Court-room, Councils' room, Maori Boards' room, Land Purchase Department's room, and interpreters' room?—Yes.

21. That would give twelve apartments including the Court-room?—Yes.

22. And how many apartments have you now?—We have got four—one Mr. Sheridan and I share, one for the clerks, one for the titles, and one other room.

23. *Mr. Barclay.*] Would it not be better to have a separate building for the Court?—Yes, if we could get it. We have only got one Court in the whole of New Zealand for Native-land business.

24. Would it not be a good arrangement to have merely the departmental offices in the building that is contemplated, and that the Court and that portion of the business should be in a separate building?—The Native Land Court and Board Room would be much better in a separate building, but not the other offices.

25. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] Does your Court invariably sit in your room?—Yes, except when they are sitting in the organ-loft in Sydney Street.

26. You mean the Primitive Methodist church?—Yes, there is a loft behind there.

27. That is frequently used for meetings of the Native Land Court?—Yes.

28. Is it large enough?—Nearly, but not quite sometimes.

29. *Mr. Massey.*] Are your offices situated now in what is known as the big wooden building—the Departmental Building?—Yes.

30. Would you prefer that your Department should have a building to itself rather than have rooms in the new building which is contemplated?—If we were anywhere near the new building it would be better; for instance, if we had a wing, but if we had to remove the papers any distance it would be too far away.

31. *Mr. Barclay.*] Well, you know the present accommodation of the Deeds Registry Office in Wellington?—Yes, down by the Post Office.

32. Would the accommodation they have there, or something equivalent to that, be suitable for what you require for your books and records?—Yes, that would be about it.

33. Only so far as your books and records are concerned?—Yes.

34. And I need hardly ask you whether you consider it is absolutely necessary that this should be done at the earliest possible moment?—I do consider it necessary. Two years ago I wrote to the Government telling them of the responsibility and the risks there were, and of the large amount of money at stake.

35. *Mr. W. Fraser.*] Do I understand you to say that all those valuable records are kept outside of a strong-room at present?—Yes, there is no strong-room.

36. Are they on wooden shelves?—Yes, on wooden shelves, and some of them are getting torn now because there is so little room on the shelves, and the Judges' names have had to be pasted on again.

37. Do you not think that that is a state of things which ought to be remedied at once by building a strong-room into which those records could be put pending the erection of the new building?—I asked for it to be done.

38. But do you think a strong-room should be provided at once, even although it be a temporary one?—Yes, I do.

39. Would it be feasible if a strong-room were erected in the vicinity of the present rooms to stow these deeds in there and take them out as you wanted them?—No, not easily, for this reason: that it is the search-room for the public. The public have the right to come in on payment of a fee, and you want to be there every day. You want the shelves in the strong-room altogether.

40. But if a fireproof room were erected in which these documents could be stored and also search made when required, would that not be advisable?—Yes, that would be the most suitable if we could get that.