The investigation of the title to the Taraire Block was commenced before the Tokerau Maori Land Council (afterwards named " Board " and hereinafter referred to as " the Board ") on the 24th October, 1902, and the Board set up a Block Committee to continue the investigation and submit a report. This Block Committee's inquiries extended over a period of about six months, and it took voluminous minutes of the evidence brought forward—these minutes running into some five hundred pages. The Committee duly made its report to the Board, which was at that time presided over by Judge Browne, and the Board spent nearly two months considering objections to the report.

The Board gave its decision, the main difference between it and the report of the Block Committee being that the Board had weeded out those persons who could trace from the ancestors but could not show proper occupation.

Orders in pursuance of this decision were made on the 2nd July, 1906.

Twenty-three appeals were lodged, and the Native Appellate Court sat at Russell from the 17th January, 1908, to the 15th February, 1908, hearing such of these as had not been withdrawn or abandoned. In all, five appeals were not proceeded with, including one by Hirimai Piripo, the husband of the petitioner, Marama Tahere.

On the 23rd March, after having considered the case for more than a month, the Appellate Court gave a decision practically confirming the finding of the Block Committee and Board as to ancestors, but varying it in certain directions. Shortly afterwards petitions for a new trial were presented to Parliament. Counsel for petitioners and respondents were heard by the Native Affairs Committee, Mr. Earl representing (with Mr. Hone Heke) the former, and Mr. Blomfield the latter, who numbered some 414 out of the total 467 owners. The matter was argued before the Committee on, we understand, three mornings during the session of 1908, but nothing was done till section 28 of the Native Land Claims Adjustment Act, 1910, was passed directing the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court to refer the petitions to the Native Land Court for inquiry and report.

The petitions covering complaints against all the decisions above referred to, it was thought advisable that the Court of inquiry should consist of at least two Judges, and, as the decisions of both Judges MacCormick and Browne were to be reviewed, it was some time before two Judges not previously connected with the matter were at liberty to proceed north to hold the necessary sittings. We will now deal in detail with each of the three petitions referred to us for report :—

No. 569. Petition of Hoori Puriri.

Mr. Dunlop, who appeared for the petitioner, informed the Court that he could not expect the decision of the Appellate Court to be entirely upset, and that he would merely ask that the Court's report should be in favour of allowing the petitioner leave to appeal for more shares against Kaipo Hoterere and Wi Hongi's parties on the ground that his ancestral claims had been overlooked.

Now, not only in this case, but in others, Hoori Puriri has always been a member of Hone Ngapua's party. The decision of the Appellate Court shows that it took into consideration all lands purchased or given, to which this party had established rights (and that without inquiring closely into the question of the validity of these purchases), and that they estimated the area of these claims at 55 acres —apart from ancestral rights.

Now, the total award to them was seventy shares, equal to about 80 acres; therefore 25 acres were allowed for their ancestral claims. This 80 acres was divided amongst nine persons only, whereas the average acreage each person in the title got was between 5 and 6 acres only. It is true that the Block Committee awarded Hone Ngapua's party 150 acres, and petitioners' counsel made a great point of this. However, if the Block Committee's allotment is scrutinized it will be found that about 1,677 shares were distributed for this portion (then supposed to contain 750 acres, but afterwards found to be 867 acres): therefore the 150 shares represented at most only an area of about 70 acres, whereas they now have 80 acres.

Instead of there being anything in the Appellate Court's judgment to lead one to believe that the ancestral claims of this party have been overlooked, it is distinctly the reverse. In our opinion nothing was brought before us to show that this petitioner had been in any way injured, and we do not think that any further consideration should be extended to him.

No. 74. Heteraka Manihera's Petition.

There was the same request that the report be in favour of leave to appeal being granted.

Mr. Dunlop at first appeared in support of the petition and then retired from the case, and Wi Tute Penetana and Wiremu Manihera were heard in support of it. Wi Tute Penetana, who afterwards practically withdrew from the petition, complained that he had been grouped with Hine Tuwhaii's list under their ancestor Korora, but we cannot see that he suffered any damage thereby. He also claimed that his children should be provided for, but they are all in the title.

Of the 70 acres awarded under Korora, Wi Tute got 10, his sister 10, and two others of the family 10 between them. Wi Tute has sold his interest in No. 1 and part of his interest in No. 2.

Wiremu Manihera claimed that he got shares on account of a *tuku* only, but, as the gift land is in Taraire No. 2 and he has had shares allotted in No. 1, it is evident that his statement is incorrect.

The statement was also made that persons were included by the Court who had no occupation. Now, before the Appellate Court Heteraka certainly did raise an objection on this ground, but it was denied by Hone Wepiha, and eventually the objection was withdrawn and a settlement arrived at in terms of Heteraka's own proposal. Heteraka was the leader of, and acting for, these petitioners at the time. Most of the statements in this petition are incorrect—some of the petitioners have not even attempted to prove. Wiremu Manihera has sold portion of his interests, and his claim by occupation is absolutely denied except a comparatively modern one dating from, and in consequence