

say that I think it has arisen from imitation of European customs as much as anything. For instance, at Nelson they proposed to elect a Superintendent for themselves on the same plan as the European Superintendent.

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1638. Was not there a similar proposal made by the Natives at Wellington?—Not exactly to appoint a Superintendent. I think there was an agitation of the kind at Otaki about two years ago, when a Native named Te Rei wanted to be appointed a Magistrate in opposition to Matene Te Whiwhi.

1639. What course did that agitation take?—The object was the election by the Natives of Te Rei in opposition to Matene, and as nearly as I recollect the result was that Te Rei had about 40 or 50 votes (or what in their estimation represented votes), and Matene had the express suffrages and sympathy of several hundreds as a recognised Chief among the tribes. Te Rei desired to set himself up in order to destroy Matene's influence.

1640. *Mr. Fox.*] Were the proceedings then conducted decorously and orderly?—I heard in letters there was some excitement and a disposition to come to blows, but it never came to anything serious.

1641. *Mr. Dillon Bell.*] I observe in the proceedings of the Kohimarama Conference that Tamihana Te Rauparaha said that you had some years ago proposed to hold similar Conferences; can you give the Committee the particulars of that (page 19 of *Maori Messenger*, August 3, 1860)?—It is about three years ago that I endeavoured to gather from the more intelligent Chiefs of the country their views with reference to the holding of such Conferences once in each year or every two years, as a means of making known their general wants, requirements, and grievances, and affording the Government opportunities of receiving suggestions from them for carrying out any measures for their permanent good, and for reconciling them as much as possible to the existing state of government in the Colony.

1642. Then that was, in your opinion, the best way of obtaining, in a recognised form, the expression of the desires of the several tribes?—I considered that a selection of the leading and influential men from the various districts of New Zealand, without reference to their party feelings, would be the best means of ascertaining the true sentiments of the various tribes inhabiting different parts of the island.

1643. You remember the Governor's message on the subject of individualizing Native Title; did not the Natives at the Conference express a desire to consider the matter carefully after they had retired to their houses?—They did.

1644. In order that their consideration of so important a subject should have some result that could be recognized by the Government, would it not, in your opinion, be desirable that their decision should be ascertained in some way in which the opinion of the sections of the tribes should be represented *inter se*?—I think it would.

1645. If it was so desirable to ascertain the general opinion of the tribes by a Conference of representatives from them all, would it not be equally desirable that the opinion of the sections of the tribes should be obtained in a similar way by deputies from those sections to a tribal runanga?—I think that it does not require a very great exertion on the part of the Government to ascertain, without any particular reference to runangas, who are the persons really qualified, by birth, position, and ability, to represent the tribe.

1646. But the runanga being an institution familiar to the Native mind and habits, would it not be better to obtain the opinion of the various tribes through that medium, in the first instance, in order that the opinions of the various runangas should be brought together before the General Conference in some general shape?—There seems to be some confusion of ideas here: there are several kinds of runangas; the name of runanga may be given to half-a-dozen people collected together; but the general term by which a meeting of tribes would be designated, at which an opinion of the tribes would be expressed, is "*hui*." The *hui* is a larger meeting than a runanga.

1647. *Mr. Williamson.*] But a *hui* is a promiscuous gathering where the opinions of all present would not be given; would they not select their influential men for purposes of deliberation?—No selection would be necessary, because there are among them persons thoroughly recognised as entitled to take the lead in deliberations, and who assume their position as a matter of right.

1648. *Mr. Fox.*] You have said that you considered a selection of leading and influential men, without reference to party feeling, would be the best means of ascertaining the Native opinion generally; where there are differences of opinion in a tribe on important subjects, how could they fairly be represented without reference to party feeling?—Each tribe in the country has its acknowledged Chief. I conceive that while his conduct is good he should be, as far as possible, recognised by the Government in the selection; and when that course is followed, I am satisfied that the tribe would not foster to any extent party feeling against the selection. If the tribe were divided in opinion, as to the confidence to be reposed in the Chief selected, it would be quite fair to recognise their right to nominate some other person, being also a Chief, to represent their views.

1649. Is the Government in a position to execute the delicate office of selection implied in your last answer, among the numerous tribes of New Zealand?—I do not consider that it is a matter attended with very much difficulty. I think the Government is quite in a position to make the necessary selection.

1650. *Mr. Brown.*] What the Committee understand is that you advocate the principle of selection by Government rather than election by the tribe itself, in a runanga or conference?—Yes, selection by Government with a due regard to the wishes and feelings of the tribe.