

With regard to Ngapuhi I have had conversations with Mr. Hakuene, who was chosen at the last election to represent Ngapuhi in Parliament, and he is directly opposed to what Taiwhanga has said to-day. Now, whom am I to take as the representative of the Ngapuhi—the member who was elected by them or Hirini Taiwhanga? I do not say this in any bitterness; I am only pointing out to you that there may be a difference of opinion both amongst Waikato and Ngapuhi. I am glad to hear from our friend Raniera that it is going to be a fine season for birds, and I know that this is a matter of some importance. I am not inclined to treat it as a light matter. I know it is important that you should have sufficient ammunition to shoot birds when they are plentiful; and I consider that the state of the Native people is such that I can now give them further facilities to procure as much ammunition as they may require for this purpose, and a circular will be sent out instructing all officers to give every facility for the procuring of ammunition. I should like to say, in passing, that I consider this to be one of the most important representative meetings of the Native people of New Zealand that has ever been held. I greatly value and appreciate the opinions which have been expressed on all sides. Of course I may differ from some, and I hope I shall be able to explain clearly in what I differ from you. I believe that this meeting will do a great deal of good, because it will lead the Native people to discuss those questions which affect their welfare, hoping and knowing that the Government will be prepared to give them every reasonable attention. Before I sit down I have to allude to two requests which were made by Mr. Tomoana. With regard to the payment of duty in advance, I shall bring that subject before the Government, and I shall ask Sir Julius Vogel, the Colonial Treasurer, to try and devise some means to have the amount collected annually, instead of having the whole amount paid down. The reason the law was changed by the last Government was this: It was found that when the duty was collected annually a great portion of it was lost, so they said, "We will make the purchaser or lessee of Native land pay the whole amount down at once, deducting the interest." I think, however, we can devise some means which will prevent the Government from sustaining loss, and enable the duty to be paid annually. With regard to rates on unoccupied Native lands, this is a very different question. I opposed the Bill in Parliament when it was first introduced in 1880, and I have opposed it ever since; and I was very severely taken to task last session by members of Parliament for what I said to the Natives about this Bill. I have never thought that Native lands should be rated before they could be used by the people, or before they had passed through the Court. I shall always be prepared to support any measure for the repeal of that Act. I shall bring the request which you have made to-day before the notice of the Government. Once again I thank you very warmly for the kind sentiments which you have all expressed towards me.

*Renata Kawepo*: With regard to your statement about the representation of Waikato, there is no representative of Waikato present. There were two tribes which did not send any representatives to this meeting—Waikato was one, and Te Whiti's tribe was another. Taiwhanga said yesterday that he was the mouthpiece of Ngapuhi and Waikato. I believe he is a representative of Ngapuhi, but not of Waikato.

*Rongowhitiua*: I should like to explain that Waikato sent no representative here. I might claim to be their representative but I do not. The only real representative that Waikato and Taranaki have at this meeting is their member, Puke te Ao.

*Henare Tomoana*: We have not been able to do all that we wished, that is, we have not discussed all the provisions of your Bill. The unanimous opinion of the meeting is that more power should be given to the Natives to administer their affairs. I will now inform you of the resolutions come to by the meeting. We desire to substitute another title for "The Native Land Disposition Bill," and wish the Bill to be intitled "A Bill to bring Prosperity to the Native Race." Secondly, we wish to have the Boards abolished. We wish to have all the clauses relating to the establishment of Boards struck out of the Bill. Now, concerning the Commissioner, the meeting has approved of Commissioners, and wishes to associate the Committee-men appointed under the Committees Act of 1883 with the Commissioner, so that they may work together. The meeting does not approve of the Public Trustee being introduced into the Bill at all, and it objects to all the clauses relating to the duties of the Public Trustee and the imposition of the 5 per cent. There are clauses in this Bill which provide that certain matters shall be relegated to the Native Land Court. We object to these clauses altogether, and ask that Native Committees may be substituted for the Native Land Court. These are the principal resolutions come to by the meeting. I hope that you will not feel hurt at these resolutions. This is the first time that the Natives have ever attempted to discuss a Bill affecting themselves, and I hope that you will not be displeased with the result. That is all I have to say with regard to the subjects dealt with by the meeting. Although copies of the Native Land Laws Consolidation Bill have not been sent to us for discussion at this meeting, I shall make some remarks with regard to it. It is the opinion of this meeting that the principles of that Bill are seriously antagonistic to the Natives; if passed it will bring great trouble upon them. I am not able at present to point out the several clauses which will bring trouble upon the Natives. I shall content myself with saying that it will do so. After having made this statement, I should like to ask you, for the information of the people, what your ideas are regarding that Bill. The Natives have had many proofs that ten persons have become unlawfully and wrongfully possessed of blocks of land. The Natives perceive that great trouble has arisen from the law which provided that not more than ten persons should be placed in the grant, and that the bulk of the owners should have their names registered on the back of the grant. This Bill proposes to validate all sorts of improper sales which took place in the past. No objection could be made to those which were carried on fairly, but we object to those in which signatures were obtained in publichouses and payments made in spirits. We object to such being validated. I will not say anything more about the Native Land Laws Consolidation Act. I have a certain amendment which I wish to bring before this meeting. It is drafted with the object of giving increased powers to the Native Committees, and further facilities for carrying on the business affecting the Native people. I will