

made. I think that road-making is a matter of great importance; and therefore I urge it upon your attention. Now I come to No. 6. You wish that, when there is any dispute with regard to the proportions of money to be paid to Natives, the matter should not be relegated to the Native Land Court to decide, but to the Native Committees. I have been thinking over that matter very much, and I think that this would meet your objection: that the matter should first be referred to the district Committee; and if their decision is not such as to give satisfaction to the people, then they should have the right of appeal to the Native Land Court. Now I have gone over the whole of the six matters brought forward by Tomoana, and I hope the answers I have given are clear to you. Let me recapitulate. We are agreed about the title. We are agreed to abolish the Boards. I am prepared to bring in the district Committees to assist the Commissioner in the way I have stated with regard to the allocation of the money, and to consider whether in any other respect they can be introduced with benefit. With respect to No. 4, I will strike out the Public Trustee, and make other provisions which I hope will be satisfactory. With regard to the 5-per-cent. commission, it is my opinion that you should allow that to remain; but I will bring the matter before the Government and state your views to them. I will tell them all that Mr. Carroll has said about the other charges, and put it to them; and if they agree I shall be very glad. But what I am afraid of is this: that, when it comes before the House, the House will not agree to it at all. The House will say, "We are called upon to go to a great expense to pay Commissioners and to carry out the machinery for dividing and disposing of the land, and yet there is nothing paid for it by the Natives." I will tell you what occurred with regard to this question of commission in the case of the reserves of the West Coast Natives. When I went up amongst them I found that the demands of the Public Trustee, apart from surveys and roads, amounted to no less than 20-per-cent. commission. I told the Natives that I thought this was a preposterous thing, and that I would do all I could to reduce the charge; and I succeeded in getting it reduced to 6½ per cent., with which the Natives were quite content. Now I come to No. 6, and I have said that I intend to refer matters to the Native Committees before they are referred to the Land Court—I mean for the allocation of money. We have now discussed, I hope in a satisfactory manner, the various questions relating to this Bill. I have tried to place my views before you in as clear a form as I possibly can. You must not suppose that the carrying of this Bill through Parliament is an easy matter. It met with violent opposition last session from certain parties in the House who are well known to you. In my opinion it will meet with violent opposition next session, and I question whether we shall be able to carry the Bill until we have first had an appeal to the country; but, if I have the Native people with me, I shall never rest while I am in power until I have carried this Bill and placed it on the Statute-book—that is the one condition—I must have the people with me. Now, allow me to finally thank you. I presume that we shall close the business by this evening. I thank you for the very intelligent way in which you have discussed this matter. My great desire is to place the Natives in the way of helping themselves. I do not think that the Government should do everything for the people, and the people do nothing for themselves; for I am convinced that things will not be satisfactory until you take your affairs into your own hands, and know how to manage them. That is the reason that I am desirous of strengthening local self-government amongst you by giving you power to deal with your own affairs in your own way, after discussion, and by weakening that power which has brought, in my opinion, so much trouble upon you. I refer to the way that individuals are worked to induce them to sell land. There are some who believe that the best thing to do with the Native people is to take the whole of their lands from them and make them work. I was horrified to see such an opinion expressed by a Judge of the Native Land Court, who is now dead, and who professed to be a great friend of the Native people. I say that the Native people of New Zealand can never maintain their position unless they have sufficient land left for themselves. I shall now refer to a matter which Mr. Carroll mentioned yesterday. It appears to me to be a question of the greatest importance to the Native people—whether they are to continue to live amongst themselves in a state of communism, or, like Europeans, in houses of their own. My own opinion, after much thought upon the subject, is that the Natives will never be in a prosperous state—or even likely to be preserved—unless each man gets his own Crown grant and his own piece of land, and lives upon it as a European does upon his. For my part, I shall be satisfied when the day comes in which each Native in the Island will have his own Crown grant and his own piece of land. I now thank you for the great consideration you have shown me.

*Tomoana*: I indorse what you have stated, and thank you for your speech. I now ask you if you will agree to come to-morrow, that we may have further discussion on some of the points raised by you.

This was agreed to by the Hon. Mr. Ballance, and the meeting then adjourned.

7th January, 1886.

The meeting was resumed to-day, when *Henare Tomoana* said: I wish to refer to a statement in one of the newspapers that this meeting would not agree to any of the provisions of your Bill. This is a misrepresentation of what took place. It is false. I have not much to say to you on the present occasion; I only want to allude to several small matters. I will inform you what took place after you left the meeting yesterday. With regard to the 5-per-cent. deduction, you made a personal request that the meeting would support you in fixing that amount. The meeting has positively agreed to that deduction. That is the result of our deliberations last night—the 5 per cent. has been agreed to. Seeing that the meeting has agreed to the 5 per cent., we hope that you will see your way to make a reduction in the 10-per-cent. Native land duty. I am afraid that this imposition of rates on Native land will pass into a custom, and that there will be further rates placed on Native lands. Twenty-five per cent. is now deducted from Native lands: 10 per cent. for leasing or selling, 10 per cent. for rating, and this 5 per cent. I do not ask you to consent immediately to this request, but I ask you to bear it in mind, and to bring it before your colleagues, and see if anything