

surrounding them did not say these men were the owners, some Court must decide the question. It is impossible that Maori land can be allowed to remain in its Maori state, without a title being obtained. Otherwise the County Councils and the Government will levy taxes, and will sell the land if necessary in order to pay those taxes. So what we have to do is to find out the best and wisest plan to adopt. The man who spoke before Kawiti said, "I will go into the Court; the Court is good enough for me." The Natives must go on; they cannot stand still. Now, then, we must find the best and safest way to go on. Wi Pomare has said, and Hori Winiana has said also, they do not like the Native Land Court; they would sooner determine these matters by Committees of their own. That has all been taken down, and, if we find that substantiated by the other people of the Ngapuhi, we shall say, "The Ngapuhi want Native Committees to decide the hapu boundaries." Parliament may say, "We will make a law and allow the Natives to have this opportunity of dealing with their lands." Then, supposing the Committee finds these 267 names to be the owners of that block of land, how are they going to deal with the land?

Atimana Parerani: I wish to explain something in connection with what the last speaker said in objecting to have our lands surveyed. The people whom we appointed to be the Committee to manage that land are included in the list; and that Committee is to make all necessary arrangements with regard to the wealth that is in the land. It is empowered to make arrangements with regard to the coal and other minerals that may be in the land. That is all done in accordance with our rule that there is to be no survey. If any European wants to lease that land, that Committee is to consider the application. If the members of that Committee see that it is well that it should be leased, then that Committee will consent. The two hundred people who are in the block would have no power to go and cause any dispute. This is explanatory of what the last speaker was saying. We are willing that a company should go and work that land for the coal; but the coal company will not accept our proposals.

Mr. Rees.] What you say now is very good sense, but it would be better in such a case as that if for the whole of this district there was a Government Commissioner, who would help the Natives to manage the land in European fashion, so that the people would be safe and the people behind them?—You have heard what Wi Pomare said. That is strongly the view of all of us here. We cannot speak on the subject.

Yes, but you are travelling on what appears to us to be the proper road. There are other things we should like to speak of now, but there is not time.

No; but there will be time to-morrow and Friday.

Hoterene Maihi Kawiti: I wish to know why the Native Land Court sitting at Waimate should deal with Kawakawa land.

Mr. Rees.] Do you complain of the Native Land Court holding its sittings at a distance from the place of abode of the people who are to attend the Court?—Yes. We object that land in this vicinity should be decided on by a Court sitting at a distance.

The Commissioners then adjourned, intimating that they would sit again in the same place on Saturday, the 4th April.

WAIMATE NORTH, 2ND APRIL, 1891.

Messrs. W. L. Rees, M.H.R., and Thomas Mackay (Commissioners) sat in the Resident Magistrate's Courthouse at 10.30 a.m., a number of Natives being present.

Mr. Rees: We had hoped to have met more of the Natives at Waimate, but we are glad to see that some of the leading men—heads of families who are looked up to by the Maoris—are present, so that probably we will get on as well as if a larger number had assembled. The Commissioners have been told that the principal subject of thought and of trouble among the Ngapuhi, especially in this part of the Ngapuhi district, arises from the action of the Government in their surveys continually overlapping and taking away lands belonging to the Maoris. Now, though the Commissioners will be anxious and willing to hear any complaints of that sort, and so to report to the Government as to get justice done to the Natives, yet the Commission has to regard other things besides that. For many years Parliament has been flooded with petitions, which have come in by scores from all the different parts of the North Island, complaining of wrongs of various sorts under which the Natives have suffered. The members of Parliament themselves were ignorant of all the matters which the petitions contained, and of the members of Parliament who knew anything about Native matters half would be on one side and half on the other. That was the same with the four Maori members, because two of them would go on one side and two on the other. The reason for this in the case of the Maori members is very simple: it arose from the fact that they were afraid to go all on one side, either the side of the Government or the side of the Opposition, lest when the other side came into power they might be altogether destroyed and not listened to. Then, every year the Parliament kept passing new Native-land laws with the hope of doing something for the Natives. But they found, instead of these new laws healing the sickness of the Maoris, that the diseases, and sicknesses, and troubles of the Maoris seemed to increase every year. At last, therefore, the Parliament and the Government have asked Mr. Mackay, Mr. Carroll, and myself, who have been appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Ministers, to go and see the Maoris in the various places and talk with them face to face about all these matters. Then the evidence is all taken down—all that the Maori chiefs say at the different meetings—and we shall report it to Parliament, together with our view of the wrongs the Maoris suffer, and the remedies that ought to be applied. Then the Parliament will have some ground to tread upon. It will see what is the real state of the case, and will be able to pass a Bill which it may reasonably hope will heal the sufferings under which the Maori people now pass their lives. Although, therefore, we shall be willing to hear about any wrongs that the Natives have suffered as regards the Government overlapping in the surveys and taking their lands, yet we shall want them to speak, and we shall