

those who wish to speak have spoken? Then the Commissioners will ask such questions as they think wise.

*Wahanui* : I am very glad that you have come here, that we may each and all hear your statements and say what we have to say. We have heard what the Commissioners have said ; but we do not know what we can say in reply. Perhaps it would be better to postpone for a while in order to enable us to consider what has been said. We are pondering what are the best means to be taken—whether it is to go this way or that way. I shall therefore repeat my suggestion that we should now adjourn until another occasion. I shall wait till I get a reply to that.

*Mr. Rees* : Of course the Commissioners have every anxiety to get the mind of the Maoris, and therefore we are bound to try and convenience them in so far as they ask for anything in reason. That is our duty.

*Wahanui* : We would like a little time to consider these matters over among ourselves.

What do you mean by a little time?—Till the evening.

The Commission accordingly adjourned till 7 p.m.

Subsequently the Natives intimated that they would be prepared to go on early in the afternoon, and the Commission accordingly resumed at 2.30 p.m.

*Henry Edwards* (half-caste) : I stand up to inform the Commissioners of the decision the Ngatimaniapoto have arrived at in reference to what the Commissioners stated to them before dinner. The reason why we hurried on with what we are doing was to enable the Commissioners to resume at half-past 2 o'clock. This is what we have arrived at : First, that the restrictions imposed upon all our lands within the Rohe Potae be removed. We are not in a position to go into other matters so long as that restriction remains over the land. With regard to another matter mentioned by the Commissioners for us to consider—viz., whether dealings with land should be conducted by hapus or individually, or whether Committees should be appointed to conduct the transactions in relation to the lands that remain after the portions required for our own use are cut out, whether those transactions be for leasing or selling—we do not consent to a law being made for that purpose. With respect to what the Commissioners said in relation to setting apart land for the purposes of schools, we cannot go into that question so long as the restriction remains on our lands. To condense what I have to say, I will put it in this way : that the restriction should be removed from the land ; and, with respect to the laws mentioned by the Commissioners, we do not consent to them. That is all I have to say.

*Mr. Carroll*.] What you say is that you do not desire to have the laws made which were suggested or spoken of by the Commissioners. Then it amounts to this : that you approve of the laws now in existence remaining in force. That is the question put to you. Because if you do not desire any alteration made in the laws the implication is that you prefer these laws remaining as they are?—In reply to your question, I have to say that, whatever may be the laws now in force, they can make no difference to us, as our lands are at present under restriction by the Government. But if the restriction of the Government were removed from our lands, we would then be in a position to see what course we would pursue.

Then, if the Government should withdraw the restrictions from these lands, are you favourable to the existing laws remaining in force?—The result of the deliberation of the Ngatimaniapoto is, that once the restriction was removed they would be in a position to say what portions of the existing laws they approved, and what portions they condemned. That which operates badly on the Ngatimaniapoto at the present time is the restriction that the Government have over their lands. So long as the lands remain in that condition the Ngatimaniapoto are unable to give consideration to other questions.

We understand that the great obstacle in your way is the restriction that exists over your lands ; but, assuming that that restriction were removed, what then is your opinion with regard to the laws?—My reply is, that in that case, the portions of the laws that act injuriously should be amended, and the portions that are unobjectionable should remain in force.

Supposing, then, that the objectionable portions were to be amended, what portion of the existing law is it that you find objection with at present?—I am unable to explain at present what parts of the existing laws are objectionable, because we have not had a great deal to do with them up to the present.

Now, let me make this clear to you : Should the Government remove the difficulty that you object to, what then is your opinion with regard to these matters—first, the sales by individuals, or sales or leases by the owners collectively?—With regard to that, we think that, should any person hold in severalty, he should be allowed to lease or sell as he likes, and that, whether the transaction were profitable or unprofitable to him, that would be his own look-out.

In the case where an owner would not have his interest held in severalty, but where the interests were held collectively in an individual block, what system would the Natives here like to be applied?—This is a rather new thing to us, and we would like to take a little time to think it over. We think that if the owner of a block of land wishes to lease or sell, his interest should be divided off in order that he might be allowed to sell or lease.

We understand that from what you have already said ; but the question now put to you is, how dealings should be conducted when the interest in the land is held conjointly with other owners and undivided?—In cases where the land would be held collectively, if a person wished to dispose of his individual interest it would rest with him to do so, but the whole of the people holding the land would decide what portion should represent this person's individual interest.

Then, is this the position you take up : that, in the case of a block of land owned by a hapu collectively, the individual owner could dispose of his interest?—What the elders think is, that in case a person went to the principal owners and intimated that he wished to sell his interest in the land the owners in the block should decide what portion of the land he was entitled to in respect of his share.