

ing the restriction, and that the question of sales and leases be held over, and that, when the time arrives when you will wish to go into the question of leasing and selling, then you will give consideration to it. The reason why the restriction was placed upon your lands was in order that they should not be sold or leased to Europeans. The only sale that was permitted was the sale direct to the Government alone. You say now that you are not desirous of either selling or leasing. Then, why should the restriction be removed? Until there is some substantial reason for removing the restriction why should it be removed? Now, you have not shown any reason why the restriction should be removed. If you were to say, for instance, "Well, we desire to have the restriction removed from the land, so that we may lease it," that would be a reason. Or, if you were to say, "We wish the restriction removed from these lands, so that we may be enabled to sell them," that also would be a reason. But your present request, "Remove the restriction. We do not want to lease; we do not want to sell;"—that is no reason; there is nothing in it.

*Taonui*: That is the one important thing we want—to have the restriction removed; and then, when the time arrives, we shall deal with the question of leasing or selling. But at the present time we are quite in the dark with regard to this restriction, and that is the reason why I say that when the restriction is removed we shall then be in a clearer position and know what to do. Mr. Carroll will understand that. We have a reason for asking that restriction to be removed, only we are not prepared to say exactly what that reason is. We made that request known to the Commissioners this morning; and when we know that the restriction is removed we shall know then what to do afterwards. Then we shall make known what our desires are.

*Mr. Carroll*: What has been spoken is understood. The restriction can be removed, or the restriction can remain unremoved. Parliament can do that; but when it does it will at the same time make a law such as it would deem beneficial for the public generally. And at the time that the Parliament may decide to remove that restriction and make this law you might see that the law so made was not in accordance with your views, or suitable to you. You might say then, "Ah! why are not our views incorporated in this law?" And the only reply that Parliament could then make would be, "We sent Commissioners to ascertain your views upon this question."

*Taonui*: That would be a matter for the four Native members to attend to.

*Mr. Carroll*: That is so; but I am explaining to you why it was that Parliament sent the Commissioners to ascertain the views of the Natives.

*Mr. Rees*: To expect Parliament to remove the restriction without knowing what is going to be done thereafter is to expect an impossibility. It would not do it. To expect Parliament to remove the restriction without knowing what was to come to pass afterwards is to expect the impossible. Indeed, the restriction can only be removed by a law which would at the same time provide for those very methods of dealing with the land that should operate for the future. The Parliament has sent the Commissioners here to deal fairly and openly with the Maoris, nothing being concealed, everything being stated and set out. The statement that Taonui made to us just now is not the same as the statement that he made to the Native Minister, nor is it the same as the statement he made to us here this morning. It will not strengthen the case before the Parliament if it is found that the Maoris conceal anything. They should meet us in exactly the same spirit as we meet them. As Mr. Carroll has told them, Parliament must make a law about these things. If they do not express their opinions about what should be done, then they cannot complain of anything the Parliament does.

*Whitinui*: I am pleased at the Commissioners having come here to hear what the Maori people have to say. Taonui and Henry have expressed the thoughts of us, the Ngatimaniapoto. The removal of the restriction over the land in the Rohe Potae is also the subject we mentioned to the Native Minister. That is the hardship that rests upon us, the owners of land in the Rohe Potae, and what we desire is that we, the Natives, should have the management of our lands returned to us. That is the important subject that we have laid before the Commissioners in response to their request to us to make our views known to them. What I said to the Native Minister was to ask him to take off the restriction from our lands, so that we shall be free to lease them. I do not approve of selling. This is also what I say to the Commissioners—and they will know therefore from what we say what answer to make to Parliament if it should ask what was the opinion of the Natives here: namely, that we desire to have the restriction removed. If the restriction imposed by the Government had been against selling, but had allowed leasing, we would never have applied as we do now for the removal of the restriction. Our hardship, as the Commissioners are already aware, is that we cannot lease or sell, except we sell to the Government. Now, under the plan which has been adopted by the Government no benefit whatever results to us, although we put our lands through the Court. The only person who comes out right is the person who sells his share. To a man like myself, who does not sell, it is simply a waste of time attending the Court, for no benefit results. That is the reason why we request urgently that the restriction may be removed, so that we may be enabled to lease our land—that we, the owners of the land, may be enabled to make terms with the lessee, whether it be the Government or any one else. With respect to what Mr. Carroll has said in asking what reason there is for the Government removing the restriction, I may just mention that when we made our application to the Native Minister to remove the restriction he replied, "It is you who asked that the restriction should be imposed;" and perhaps that is also what the Commissioners will say. Then, if our request to have the restriction imposed was granted, why should not our request to have the restriction removed be likewise acceded to? I think that this is a very substantial reason for the Commissioners to convey from us to Parliament to show why the restriction should be removed: that the owners may be enabled to lease their lands. That is all I have to say. If there are any questions I shall be prepared to answer them.

*Mr. Carroll*.] Then, this is the meaning of what you say: you are opposed to selling?—Yes.

Then that is clear. But you are willing to lease?—Yes, I am agreeable to leasing.