

by four of the Natives to a European who desired to purchase it. The tribe for whom it was reserved were left out in the cold. There were two eel-swamps included in that reserve: these were also included for the benefit of the people. Whatuma was the name of this reserve. One of these reserves, or a part of it, is now claimed by the European as a portion of his purchase. When the Seventy-mile Bush went through the Court a large number of Natives were put in as owners, and a majority of them received the greater portion of the land. Pukehou is the name of another block, and 7,000 acres of that was excluded during the investigation, and called Pukehou No. 6. Now, the Government claim 4,000 acres of that 7,000, leaving only 3,000 acres for the Maoris. There are other lands in the same position, but some one else will explain the circumstances connected with them to the Commissioners after I have finished. There is yet another block, called Raukawa No. 1, comprising 7,900 acres, which was reserved for the Natives; but all the Natives have got is 3,000 acres, and the Government have taken the balance of that land. The Natives did not sell the other 4,900 acres; the Government took them. Another reserve is that on which the Waipawa Native pa is situated. When the Waipukurau Block was sold a reserve was made at Waipawa. A portion of that reserve has been taken by the Europeans, and there is only a small balance in the possession of the Natives now. Matauomaui is the name of another block: that was sold by two people. The people for whom that reserve was made were not parties to the sale; and yet it is maintained by the Europeans that that is a valid sale, though made by only the two people; and they maintain that they have a proper right to the land. That is all I have to say on this subject, but somebody else will follow me upon it. That, however, is all I have to say to the Commissioners with regard to the troubles the Natives labour under through alleged sales of land. Now, with regard to the Native Land Court I wish to point out that great injury is inflicted upon the Natives, and on their lands, through its operations. From the year 1866 right down to the present time the evils arising from that Court have been very grievously felt by the Natives. The first evil was that, even although there might be fifty people entitled to a block of land, yet only ten men were put in the certificate as owners. All the lands that were adjudicated on at that time were associated with and conveyed that evil; the majority of the true owners being excluded from the certificates. These people who were thus excluded from the ownership had no opportunity of applying for these cases to be reinvestigated. There was no appeal. Then, when at last the evil resulting from this system of procedure was recognised, the law was altered, so that large numbers of names could be inserted in the titles; and, after this law, which allowed hundreds of names to go into these instruments of title, had been passed, other alterations were made in the law to provide for subdivisions and successions. Under the first law there was one decision given, and it was final; but under the subsequent laws there were repeated investigations. A particular block has been known to be reinvestigated no less than five times. I want to know where this sort of thing is to stop. It is these things that are the parents of a great many of the evils of which the Natives bitterly complain in connection with the administration of their lands. Down to the present time these laws have generated nothing of good to the Natives, but, on the contrary, they have been fruitful of evil consequences; and upon all these things—the Land Court, surveys, and so on—a great deal of money has been expended. Now, with regard to those subjects of inquiry intrusted to the Commission which relate to the future: The first of them is, as to the best steps to be taken for the future; and upon that point I shall now speak. The plan that the Natives would approve of is that Native Committees should be constituted, and endowed with full power, as in the case of the Committees provided for under the Act of 1883. These District Committees should be thoroughly established. There may be other sorts of committees, for which the speakers who will follow me may have a preference. But some change in that direction is required, as the Natives have suffered greatly from the evils resulting from the operation of the Native Land Court. The opinion of the Natives whom you see assembled here is decidedly that they should have their own Committee to control their lands, and that this Committee should have the control of all matters relating to their land, such as subdivisions, and so on. Their wish is to save the enormous expense that is now attendant upon these operations. This completes the explanation I have to offer to the Commissioners. There are plenty of other chiefs here ready to give utterance to their thoughts. [Henare Matua then handed in a list of the blocks to which he had referred.]

*Henare Tomoana:* Let me first of all congratulate the Commissioners for having come here. The heart rejoices at the action of the Government in sending Commissioners to the Native people. It is an entirely new departure on the part of the Government to seek out the evils under which the Natives labour. The Native people here are therefore very pleased indeed at the step that has been taken. I stand up now to support what has been said by the previous speaker, and I desire also to mention matters that were omitted by him. I do not say that there has been great injustice done to the Natives in consequence of the Native Land Court. But what I do say is this: that great evils have befallen the Natives in consequence of the laws made by the European members of Parliament. The action of members in that way has borne with great oppressiveness indeed upon the Natives. The laws under which the Native Land Court worked in the beginning were better than those under which it works now. When the Government assumed control of the Native Land Court, then the evil results became severe indeed. Ever since the Government took control the evils have been great and manifold. I will now condense what further I have to say. What Henare has stated with regard to the Natives having control of their own affairs I thoroughly coincide with. Let the Natives have especially control of their own lands, because there is one important matter that I have heard of in this connection: It is that the Government in New Zealand informed the Government in England that the Maoris were represented in the Parliament of the colony, where these laws are made. That is true enough, but then there are only four Maori members in the House of Representatives. The Native members are quite capable of doing their duty there, but they are overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the pakehas in that House. Therefore we ask now that we may be allowed to make our own laws.