

*Mr. Carroll* : We would like to finish with the Natives first.

*Mr. Grace* : If you do not fix a time they will talk on for ever ; but if they know that a time is fixed they will curtail their speeches.

*Mr. Rees* : This evening will do for the purpose. The more evidence we get the better the Commission and Parliament will be pleased. We want to make an exhaustive inquiry.

[Subsequently it was arranged that the Europeans should appear before the Commission the following morning, and that their remarks should be interpreted to the Natives, so that the latter might reply if they chose.]

*Pene te Ua* : The first thing I wish to say is, to express my congratulations to the visitors who are here, and on behalf of the residents here to welcome them for coming, although they had no expectation of our being able to treat them with customary hospitality. I desire also to support what the previous speakers have said. Although some of us may have read the contents of the document printed and circulated by the Commissioners, yet there are others of us who may not have read that document. At any rate, we support what has been said here to-day. I wish to offer some explanation with regard to three blocks of land that have been already referred to. Ngatarawa and Whakapirau have been mentioned, but these are really two names for the one block. That is a block of land that was sold improperly. There is a dispute in relation to it between the Natives and some Europeans. The transaction in respect to it was concluded between Sir Donald McLean and Renata Kawepo. There are three people included in the Crown grant who have not signed the conveyance. Renata Kawepo and Sir Donald McLean signed their names. Then, there is another block of land, named Raukawa No. 1. The investigation of the title of that block was not known, but all the portion of the block belonging to the Ngatiupokoiri went. That is the trouble in connection with that land. The Pukehou is another block that has already been mentioned. The Natives were asked by the Government to pay for that reserve, and the Natives paid Captain Preece in regard to that. There was one person to pay the Government for that land, and after that one person had paid Captain Preece application was made for the whole of the Natives to be included in that land. After the man had paid the Government for the land, Captain Preece said all the people were to go into it. There is trouble now in connection with it, and that is the reason why it is now brought before the Commissioners. There is also trouble in connection with another block that has been mentioned, and which is situated at Cape Kidnappers. That land was sold simply by two people, and the whole tribe had no knowledge of it being parted with. When the Natives went upon the land, they found that they were banished from it by the Europeans ; and that dispute exists down even to the present time, between the man who has purchased it and the Natives.

*Henare Tomoana* : I wish to ask for an adjournment until 2 o'clock, so as to obtain further copies of the Commissioners' circular, to enable the people to deliberate upon the matters contained in it. We shall then be able to formulate what we have to say.

*Mr. Rees* : If any one wishes to speak before we adjourn, it is better that he should be allowed to do so, as we may be pushed for time.

*Arapeta Meha* : I wish to state now what I have to say. I desire in the first place to congratulate the Commissioners on their coming here. This is a new plan of ascertaining what the views of the Natives are. In former times there was only one means through which utterance could be given to the views of the Natives, and that was through their parliamentary representatives. Now, this great work has been undertaken of appointing a Commission to meet us face to face, and we rejoice very much indeed at it. That concludes my greeting to the Commissioners. The first evil that we discovered in the working of the Native Land Court was the inclusion of only ten people in each Crown grant, no matter how many might be the owners of the land for which it gave a title. In consequence of that law people who should have been included were left out. Recently an alteration has been made in that law, providing for the inclusion of those who had a right in the lands. That is the Equitable Owners Act. We say now that that is not as perfect a law as it might be, because it relates only to lands that passed under the Act of 1865. My complaint to the Commissioners is this : that the Equitable Owners Act should be extended to cases under any Act up to the time when it became the practice of the Court to put in all the people in the certificates. That is all I wish to explain on that point. Another matter which I wish to explain to the Commissioners is with regard to some land which is reserved at Eparaima. That reserve was included in the sale of the Porangahau Block.

How was it included?—It was excepted from the sale of that block. At the time of that sale there were three separate reserves made. The name of this particular reserve is Ohineuha. At the time that reserve was made the Natives were living on and cultivating it. Mr. Ormond was the first European who settled alongside that block. He was living for many years on his own land, and then he asked the Natives to allow him to use the Native reserve. After that, my mother, who was the owner of that reserve, died. One of her brothers sold the timber rights to Mr. McLean. The Natives at the time knew that they only parted with the timber rights, but retained the land. Subsequently, however, it was discovered that the land was also sold. Parliament was petitioned in reference to this land. In 1877 the old chief here, named Matiu, went to Mr. Ormond, and mentioned the matter to him, and Mr. Ormond then said that he was aware it really was Native land, and he added that the error made in relation to it was made by McLean. The error was in claiming the land, instead of the timber merely. Mr. Ormond also told Matiu that if he would go to Wellington he would try and get the land back for the Natives. But nothing was done.

The Natives, then, did not get the land back?—No ; nothing was done in respect of it. That is all I have to say with regard to that subject. There is another block of land that was reserved—Pukemaho, on the northern side of Waipawa. That was a reserve made at the time of the sale, and the portion that was reserved for the Natives is between Tarahi and Haowhenua ; in extent it