

is about 250 acres. Now, it is contended that the land which has been purchased includes this portion that was reserved. The Natives do not know where their reserve is. That is all I have to say about that. I congratulate the Commissioners upon their very excellent work.

*Nepe te Aritu*: I wish to express my feelings of praise to the Commissioners, and to say that we wish them prosperity for their efforts in coming among the Natives in this new way, giving the Natives matters for reflection and consideration—subjects to turn over in their minds, and express their opinions upon. I wish first of all to support what has already been said to the Commissioners here. The matters mentioned in the paper handed in by Henare Matua are the troubles that affect us. That is in relation to the reserves which have been referred to, and disputed sales, and lands wrongfully absorbed in Government purchases; also land included in certain Crown grants given to the ten only, the rest of the people interested being kept out. That is with regard to the law affecting cases where some sold and some did not sell. All these matters have been brought before the Commissioners already. With regard to the plan which should be adopted for the administration of the lands of the Natives in this district, we have come to the conclusion that the plan of having a Native Committee should be adopted, because it will lighten the business that the Natives will have to take into the Native Land Court. That is why we think the question of the Committee is one deserving the earnest consideration of the General Assembly. With respect to the Committee that already exists in this district, I may say that it is rather weak, because only small matters are submitted to it. For that reason we pray the Commissioners to obtain for the Committee extended power, because the matter that presses heavily upon the Natives has its origin in questions affecting their lands. I cannot compress into the short compass allowed me at this meeting all that I have to say with regard to the Native Land Court. But we would place our opinion before you for your consideration. The Europeans are fully aware how the Native Land Court bears heavily on the Natives. There is, for instance, the long time that it takes the Court to investigate the title to small blocks of land. To that matter, therefore, we beg the Commissioners to give their attention. That is all upon that head. With respect to the Ruataniwha Block, which Hefare Matua mentioned as extending to the summit of the high hill known as Ruahine, I may just state, so as to make more clear in the evidence its exact locality, that it is near Waipawa.

*Ihaia Hutena*: At the very outset I desire to express my good feeling towards the Commissioners who are sitting here. I wish them success and prosperity in their labours in connection with the matters that have been submitted to us. It is a subject of large importance. For many years past there have been meetings of the Natives for the purpose of establishing some plan or scheme with the aid of Parliament; and, while those Native gatherings entailed much expense, their desires and ends were never realised. Some of the chiefs of this part of the country have passed away with these hopes unrealised. Now we witness a new departure in the form of a Commission being appointed to meet the Natives and ask them to make known their thoughts to them; and this plan is similar to the one striven for and desired by the Natives in times past. The action of the Commissioners at the present time is what the Natives have long looked forward to. We are united in the expression of the opinion that has already been given utterance to by the first speakers. I refer to the opinion stated in answer to the Commissioners' request for our views to be set forth. I should like the Commissioners to give some thought to the Native law that was passed in 1886. I mean the Native Equitable Owners Act. That law was made to meet special cases only. It applies merely to lands held by ten grantees, where really the number of owners is greater than the ten. At the present time that Act is a dead-letter, and not much result has been seen from it since it was passed. Having now disposed of this branch of the subject, I wish to take the opportunity of making clear to the minds of the Commissioners the error of which we complain in connection with the Waipukurau Block. That land was a reserve Crown-granted to four or five people. But it was not a claim that was formally gazetted. That is the complaint of the Natives—that the Crown grant was issued for this land when the claim was not formally gazetted. I merely mention this in order to throw a little more light upon the account of the matter given by some of the other speakers. Pukemaho, which was referred to by another speaker, was the portion of land excluded from the Haowhenua Block for the benefit of the Natives. Some years afterwards that portion was included in the land that was already Crown-granted, and it is in connection with it that the trouble now exists, this trouble being through the improper inclusion in the Haowhenua Block of a part of the reserve.

*Mr. Rees*: We shall be glad to hear any other Native before we proceed to ask questions.

*Hori Niania*: I wish to inform the Commissioners that I support what Henare Matua and Henare Tomoana have said. I agree with them that the Native Committee should have power delegated to it by the Government in respect of the Native district of Hawke's Bay. I personally have suffered very much through the operation of the Native Land Court, owing to the action of sales, and through the question of surveys and other interferences in connection with the Native lands. Hence it is that I uphold what Henare Matua and Henare Tomoana have said about having a Native Committee for the District of Hawke's Bay. Should this Committee be empowered and recognised by the Government it would be enabled to award and divide the land up fairly, and allot it to the proper owners. I have nothing to say beyond indorsing the action taken by those two speakers with regard to the Committee.

*Wi Rangirangi*: I wish to bring before the Commissioners a question with regard to some land that has been improperly sold. Te Mokoepi is the name of the block. It comprises 6,000 acres, and was sold for one horse. Another block is named Tarawera—land that was reserved. These are the only matters I wish to speak about.

*Aperahama te Kume (Taupo)*: I wish to express my pleasure at this new work that is being done—with this appointment of a Commission by the Government to investigate matters in relation to Natives and Europeans. Salutations to you! I differ from the others. It has been said that the