

like those complaints in reference to the Wairarapa Lake which have just been inquired into. Cases like this affect the people here only; but, in regard to the principles which affect the whole of the Maori race as to what ought to be done with their lands, we understand that those resolutions, passed at the Wairoa meeting, express the views which the Native people here entertain. We therefore leave it to the people to take what steps they think wise in relation to bringing matters before us, hoping at the same time they will not fancy that we wish to cut them short in speaking, but that they will condense what they have to say within reasonable limits.

*Mr. Carroll*: We do not desire to check the Natives who may wish to address us, but they need not be unnecessarily long. Mr. Rees has explained generally the reason why we are going about the country, and it now rests with you to bring up any local matters you desire to speak about.

*Piripi te Maari*: I wish to express my satisfaction with the explanation which the Commissioners have given with regard to their travelling throughout the country, and in relation to their present visit here. I desire to reciprocate the feelings you have uttered in desiring to become acquainted with the views which we hold on the subjects committed to you for your investigation. You are the persons who were appointed by the Government to go through the country and investigate the matters relating to the Natives; and, as you say, only one district now remains unvisited—Otaki—which when you have visited your work will cease. All that the Natives of the Wairarapa district have to say to the Commissioners is to make known to them the subjects dealt with by the Wairoa meeting, and the result of the deliberations which took place there. The whole of the Native people within the boundaries of the East Coast assembled at Gisborne or were represented there. Our own people were there, and they joined with the others in laying down such principles as, in the general opinion, ought to be adopted for the benefit of the Maori race. The chiefs, the men of learning, the Committees, and capable persons of all degrees were present at that meeting. Te Whatahoro and myself were also present at that meeting, and all the subjects dealt with thereat are completed, and we have brought the results here. Now that you have come here to-day in the prosecution of the work for which you were appointed, we shall place in your hands the subjects dealt with at the Wairoa meeting, and we ask you to look carefully into them, and to have them presented to the Houses of Parliament during the forthcoming session. That completes the explanation I had to make to you. We wish prosperity to all of us who are engaged in promoting this work.

*Tunuiarangi*: I have very little to speak about to the Commissioners. We have received the various subjects of discussion for which the meeting at the Wairoa was held. So far as I am able to see, the subjects dealt with by that meeting in relation to the important matters affecting the Islands are similar to those to which the Commissioners have referred. There may be some minor points that have not been touched upon, but those who were investigating the subject will be able to ascertain and point out what they are. My reason for standing up before the Commission is merely to say that I consent to what was adopted at that meeting. That meeting at the Wairoa was a large and representative one of all places and of all the tribes in the constituency of the Native member for the East Coast; and after a good deal of consideration certain resolutions were adopted, in respect to which it would now be difficult and unbecoming for the few to keep outside. There may, perhaps, be another Native meeting, in some other part of the Island, at which the Maoris will be seeking out some plans for adoption with respect to Native affairs. In my opinion the subject is a very difficult one to deal with, because there may be a great divergence of opinion among the various tribes—the Ngapuhi, Ngatimaniapoto, Wanganui, and the people in this district; but, so far as I can judge, what has been agreed upon at the Wairoa meeting is suitable to all parts of the colony. Therefore I express my satisfaction with it, and perhaps at some other meeting, if anything has been omitted, it may be found out and supplied. That is all I have to say.

*Hamiora Mahupuku*: Prosperity to the Commissioners, prosperity to the interpreter of the Commissioners, and prosperity to their secretary! I wish to address the Commissioners in relation to what took place at the Wairoa meeting. What took place there was published among us; and when the resolutions of that meeting were made known, the people of the Wairarapa assembled together. Upon four of the subjects dealt with at that Wairoa meeting I wish now to speak. The first is the matter of the District Committees; the second is as to the Committee dealing with the equitable disposition of land; the third subject is with regard to the appointment of trustees for minors; and the fourth is with respect to thirty-year leases of land to Europeans. Let me make known my thoughts upon subject No. 2. What I have to say upon that subject will refer only to the lands in the Wairarapa district. In this district the Natives have their boundaries settled, and their individual portions are known, and the Natives are occupying the land in a similar way to that which obtains amongst the Europeans. The Native Land Court sat for two years in this district, and carried out the various subdivisions. All that remains to be done, therefore, is the surveying of the individual portions. For that reason I do not think there is any necessity for the Native Committees to act here, as each man's portion of land is known. That is why I thought it but right to put this matter clearly before the Commissioners, so that they may be fully aware that our individual interests are known and are subdivided. We are not now in the position that formerly obtained, when twenty or thirty people were in the certificate as holding undivided interests. For such cases as that the Committee would be the right thing. With regard to the interests of minors, I think that the people whom the Court appoints as trustees for minors should have absolute authority. At the Wairoa meeting it was said that the Chairmen of the Committees should consent to the manner in which the minors' interests should be dealt with in leasing or otherwise, and that they should have the power of vetoing any action of the trustees if they thought it necessary. I think that the law passed by Parliament and in force at the present time is a proper one, because the person who is appointed is known as the Public Trustee. He has to look after all these matters. I think that the existing law, affording protection to Natives in the disposition of their lands, is quite sufficient, because it is seen by that law that provision is made that a Native does not part with the whole of his land. That is the reason why, in regard to this district, wherein all