

Then, upon another matter altogether outside those to which I have been referring, the Wairoa meeting passed a resolution that the Government should be requested to give power to the District Native Committees to try cases in which there is domestic trouble—where, for instance, a man leaves his wife, or a wife leaves her husband—as marital desertions are now becoming rather frequent. [At this stage Mr. Thomas Mackay arrived and took his seat.] It was also decided that power should be requested for the Committees to suppress drunkenness at their meetings, and powers to deal with social matters; to have powers also to prevent persons draining swamps, lakes, and so on—all this, of course, in relation to lands held under lease, or in respect of other Native lands, so that persons may be restrained from damaging the property. Those are all the points.

*Mr. Rees.*] Does any of the clauses which you read in respect of the leasing of Native land specify how the leases are to be made, and who is to make them—whether all the people are to consent, or whether the power of leasing is to be placed in the hands of a Committee?—Yes; it is provided for there. Then, there were some other separate matters dealt with by the Wairoa meeting, and added on. Thus: No Maori should be allowed to have more than £10 credit a year from tradespeople; should any tradespeople allow a Maori to get into debt to a greater extent than £10, it should be at that tradesman's own risk, and he should have no power to recover from the lands or chattels of the Maori. Neither sales nor leases should be allowed for the payment of debts. In the case of mortgages, purchases, or sales, that no debts already incurred should be taken into account. The resource that is open to them, at any time where they find fault with the Judge, the Committee, or the members of the Committee during the investigation of a case is that they shall report the same to the Chief Judge and the Government; and every such complaint made to them and the Chief Judge shall be treated as a serious matter by the Chief Judge, and not ignored. Another matter that the Wairoa Committee requested Piripi and myself to ask the Commissioners was, that they would be good enough to have the whole of the resolutions which I have just read out translated, and printed, and circulated throughout the country amongst all the tribes, and particularly amongst those of the East Coast, so that they may be made known throughout the Island, and so that the various tribes may be clear in mind as to what steps were agreed upon before they are submitted to Parliament. Another request that the Committee made was that printed copies should be sent them, so that they may have them distributed amongst the Natives of the East Coast. We also intend to send to the Commissioners a fair copy of what I have read out. I wish now to inform the Commissioners that Piripi and myself have finished our work in laying before you in detail what was done by the Wairoa meeting, and my desire is that the Commissioners will attentively consider all these matters, and that they will be able to recommend something to Parliament that will prove of immense benefit to the Maoris throughout the Islands. We are not in a position to alter any of the principles contained in the resolutions that I have read out; and the reason is, that what is set forth there was agreed to at that Wairoa meeting, which represented the Natives of the entire East Coast district. Add that to the report you have got, or will get, from your other meetings throughout the colony, and then choose from the whole what you deem to be best and wisest. The great desire that the Natives have is, that, as the outcome of your labours, the welfare and prosperity of the people, whatever their opinions may be—Hauhaus and others—may be secured and promoted. We entertain the same feeling likewise as regards the European population; it is our wish that their interests, equally with our own, should be protected and advanced. Although it is suggested here that a special Commission should be appointed to settle all those old matters of dispute, dating from the present time backward, still I think I may be permitted to take advantage of this opportunity to lay before you some matters in which I am personally concerned. One of the blocks of land that are in dispute between ourselves and the Government and the Europeans is the Wairarapa Lake. This dispute has been investigated by a Commission, and probably its report has been sent in. A block of land that has not yet been dealt with by the Commission is Moroa. It is land that formed the subject of a gift to the Queen. It was arranged at the time that if a township were founded on that land, or if special improvements were made on it by the Europeans, the Natives should get back one acre in every ten—this principle of tenths in respect of the land being adopted with a distinct view to the benefit and advantage of the Natives. Another stipulation made at the time was that, in the event of the land being sold, the Natives should have refunded to them 5 per cent. of the proceeds of the sale. Now, the land has been disposed of, and yet the Natives have received neither the proportionate acreage nor the proportion of money that was promised them. Another matter that I desire to speak about has reference to the college endowments at Papawai and Masterton. The land endowment at Masterton was made over by the Natives to the Bishop for the establishment and maintenance of a school, and yet, from that day till this, no school has been established. The only things that we see upon that land are sheep and cattle and so forth. There is no school there. So long ago as 1862 a school was started at Papawai, but it lasted for three years only. The master went to the other Island, and the school was abandoned. It happened that just at that time the Rev. Mr. Völkner was murdered by the Hauhaus, and the teacher became alarmed at this, and abandoned the school in consequence. The Native people at Papawai are now maintaining a school at their own expense. It is held in one of their own houses, and they pay the teacher's salary. We commenced in 1885 to appeal to the Government to let us have a school for our children. The Government consented, and they applied to the Bishop to give us 10 acres out of our endowment. Its area is 400 acres, and we asked that 10 acres should be returned to us for this purpose. Now, as to the whole of the revenue derived from these two endowments, down to the present time we are in perfect ignorance how it has been disposed of, because there has never been any statement of accounts. Even the schoolhouse at Papawai was put up by the Government, not by the Bishop. We now make application that there may be a boarding-school established on that land at Papawai, so that the children of the district and outside places can