

made known to us to-day, were clear and were heard distinctly, but when you came to the end I was somewhat confused. I followed attentively the statements of the Commissioners, and the only thing I am grieved at is the short time I have for thinking the whole matter over. What I am most anxious about is that another opportunity should be given us to consider more thoroughly the subjects that have been laid before the meeting, so that we may be enabled to see clearly what course it is best to pursue, and whether good or evil is likely to arise if we follow it. Now, I am not at all clear as to what I should do, because the time at our disposal has been so very short. It must be evident that, if substantial knowledge is to be acquired, and if opinions of any worth are to be ascertained, a very considerable time is required to arrive at such results. Now, I wish to speak with respect to myself. The Ngatiraukawa Tribe can speak for themselves, and the Ngatitōa, Ngatiawa, and also the Ngatimaniapoto Tribes can speak for themselves, despite the fact that you have met members of the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe elsewhere. I am merely speaking for myself, and I may as well conclude my words here lest I should be hindering any one else from addressing the Commissioners.

*Akapita te Tewe*: Salutations to you, Mr. Carroll, and to your friends who have been chosen along with you for this work! I am very pleased indeed that you have come to this district to carry on the business you have in hand, in endeavouring to seek out aright the opinions of the Natives in relation to these matters that so closely concern them. The only thing that the Natives are grieved about is that the grievances and afflictions that have befallen them are deep and bitter. And the reason why we have gathered together is because you, the Europeans, are able to discern what is good and what is evil in the measures that may be suggested for our relief. You have come to see us because of the grievances we labour under, and you have made known to us the reasons why you have been travelling through the country. It is quite true that our grievances are solely owing to the Native Land Court laws, and not to the other laws of the pakeha. The first grievance that was inflicted upon us through the Native Land Court was the inclusion of only ten persons in a Crown grant. Great numbers of people, owning large areas of land, have suffered through that law. Then, when we realised the hardships arising from that law we applied to you, and another law was made. We, the Natives, looked to the law as the source of our salvation. Subsequently to that the Government passed a law making our lands inalienable. Then the law was so altered by the Government as to provide for removing the restrictions, and under that law also a great number of Natives suffered severely. All these grievances have arisen from the one source, the Native Land Court. After the establishment of the Native Land Court there came the Road Board system, and the rest of the machinery of local government, and the laws that were then made affected us severely. When we availed ourselves largely of the assistance of the Native Land Court in the beginning, we did not suffer so much as we do now. The troubles increase. It does not matter what area of land a block embraces—it may be 10,000 acres or 20,000 acres—in either case the investigation of the title costs a very large sum. After this main inquiry has concluded, then commences the subdivision, and £2,000 or £3,000 may be expended before we get our title. Hence it is that these laws which regulate the operation of the Native Land Court bring a great deal of trouble upon us. Those who get large areas of land come out well enough; those who only get small areas suffer very much. That is why I am clear about what you say in asking whether there are any evils resulting to us from the operation of the Native Land Court, and why I have no hesitation in saying “Yes” to that question. If it were possible the Committees should have the subdivision of the lands. It would suffice for the Court to deal with the block as a whole. Another complaint that we have to make with regard to the Native Land Court relates to the lying propensities that have been developed among the people; for it is the system pursued by the Court that affords encouragement to this sort of thing. The evidence given on oath in the Court might be of some account if God were present to chastise the man who lied; as it is there is no deterrent. The Native Land Court, therefore, is the great source of all the evil that befalls the Maoris. That is all I have to say.

*Wiremu Kiriwahi*: I wish, in the first place, to offer my greetings to the Commissioners for coming to this place. We have heard the explanation of the subjects that have been laid before us. In former times this class of people (the Commissioners) were land-purchasers, and it is only in these later days that we perceive that this class of people are changed, and that they now come amongst us to speak to us on matters affecting our welfare. It is for this reason that I welcome the Commissioners. I have something to say with regard to the first subject introduced to our notice to-day by the Commissioners—the Native Land Court. That is the true source of the evil that afflicts this Island. All the tribes have been bewailing its evil results, and have repeatedly sent up their lamentations to Parliament. If you have come to say that the Native Land Court shall be done away with, the people here will agree with you, because numerous indeed are the grievances of which the Natives have to complain in consequence of its operations. The speaker who immediately preceded me instanced some of the evils that have resulted from that Court and its work. There is but a small portion of land in this part of the Island remaining to the Natives at the present time. The greater portion has been operated on by the Court. If the Commissioners have the necessary power, then we ask them to return to the Maoris the balance of our land which has not yet been dealt with by the Court, and let us deal with it ourselves through our Committees. The whole of the Natives will be persistent in clamouring for the cessation of the Court's operations so long as the Court remains. If the Court is not abolished, the bitter grieving and the deep lamentations of the Natives will continue year after year, and their complaints will continue to be sent up to Parliament. The whole of the Ngatiraukawa recognise and deplore the evils that result from the Native Land Court, and all the tribes of the Island know that it is the root from which all their troubles spring. For this reason I strenuously urge the Commissioners to be strong in building up a plan by means of which the Native Land Court shall be swept away. That is all I have to say on that subject. With regard to a matter that was subsequently dealt with by the Commissioners—viz., the troubles that have arisen between Europeans and Natives respecting the Native