

lands—I maintain that all these troubles are the offspring of the Native Land Court. I do not say that that class of troubles should be specially taken in hand by the Commissioners, but I would rather say, let them settle such troubles between themselves. There are persons—lawyers and others—who can adjust such difficulties. With regard to those lands that in past times were improperly parted with, one of the Commissioners has stated that he has seen land in this district that was set apart for the purposes of a Native school. That is true. That land was given by the Ngatiraikawa Tribe for the establishment and maintenance of a school. Our old men assembled, and agreed to the land being given for that purpose. But at that time the old people consented in their obtuseness, not clearly understanding what they were doing. If this is the time for going into that matter it would be well that the Commissioners should thoroughly investigate it. The Commissioners will then see whether these lands were improperly given, or whether there were difficulties in connection with these gifts. I will leave that matter in the hands of the Commissioners, for them to look into. With regard to the promoting of leases, and the character they should take, I say that for many years past the Europeans have been making laws in relation to dealings with Native lands in this Island. Now, I consider that the time has come when the Government should hand over to the Natives the making of a law—that is to say, the whole of the Natives of this Island. During the last thirty years, that the making of these laws has been in the hands of the Europeans, they have failed to make good laws, and the Government therefore should allow the Maoris to try what they can do in that direction, seeing that it is they who are vitally affected by them. I have nothing further to explain.

*Kipa Whatanui* : Salutations to you, the Commissioners, who are sent by the Government to seek out the difficulties under which the Natives labour. The Commissioners have explained the reasons for which they have come here, and those reasons are for us to consider and examine into. I support what the member for the Western Maori District has said as to our not having had time, so far, to deliberate upon the matters submitted to us. Time for that purpose is essential, in view of the very great importance of these matters. We certainly cannot complete our consideration of them to-day. I would therefore ask the Commissioners to let us have a statement of the reasons they have set before us, so that we may have an opportunity of going into them at our leisure ; and the result of our deliberations will be forwarded on to them afterwards.

*Mr. Rees* : The Commissioners have been speaking among themselves about this matter since Taipua addressed us, and this is what we have decided to do : to hear now everything the Natives have to say to us, affording opportunity to as many chiefs to speak as desire to do so before we go. Then we shall leave with you copies of these printed papers (copies in Maori of the orders of reference and of the digest of Native evidence taken in the Auckland Province), and you may talk over among yourselves all these matters as fully as you like, sending the results to us in Wellington. But do not let that arrangement stop you from speaking now. You must remember that we have to send in our report as early as possible, and therefore no unnecessary time must be taken up in arriving at a decision on these matters.

*Mr. Carroll* addressed the Natives in Maori to a similar effect.

*Kipa Whatanui* : I am extremely pleased at your having come here to-day to Otaki. But the main difficulty affecting this country you have omitted to refer to. In the year 1835 a petition was sent to King William, in which we expressed to him our desire that “you will be a parent to us, your children.” In 1840, when this colony was established, Her Majesty Queen Victoria had become the successor of King William. After that the Treaty of Waitangi was entered into. And in that treaty were these words: “Unto you will be the right, authority, and power over your own land, and that right, authority, and power will be conserved.” In 1852 the Europeans in this country obtained the necessary power to set up a form of constitutional government. The Home Government consented to give a Constitution to New Zealand, and that the Maoris should have a Parliament for themselves. Then, after that the great Native meeting of Kohimarama was held, and at that meeting the elders of this country agreed that the Native Land Court should be established. In consequence of the assent then given, the Government agreed to four Native members being elected to Parliament. Then the European and Maori Parliaments became united ; but the very great preponderance in number of the European over the Maori members gave rise to many evils that have afflicted us. Supposing a division takes place over any Maori matters, as there are only four Maori members in the House of Representatives they are defeated as a matter of course ; and to the best of my understanding that is the cause of the evils that have grown up in New Zealand in connection with Native matters. It is true that the evils we have submitted to Parliament in reference to our lands are evils that do really exist ; but when the matter comes before the House, and a division is called for, the great number of members vote on the European side, and but a very few vote on the side of the Natives. That is all I have to say about that. I have land that came to me from the date of the Treaty of Waitangi. It is called the Horowhenua Block. It is land that was acquired by my ancestors through conquest. But in 1873, when that land was brought before the Native Land Court, it was taken from me, and from us, the descendants of Whatanui. That land of mine was purchased with blood, and it would not be right to return it to the original owners. On the other hand, the lands of Taranaki, Waikato, and Tauranga were acquired through conquest by the Queen, and are known as confiscated lands. These conquests were made according to law, and these lands have never been returned. My desire is that the adjudication of the lands should be conducted on the same principle as the trial of a man for murder. The murderer is tried three times before he is executed. Hence my wish that the same principle of trial should obtain with respect to the right of ownership in land. I desire the questions as to this land of mine should be tried on the same principle—that there should be three hearings. Another grievance that the Natives complain of is with respect to lands of mine that were dealt with in 1874. Te Waka is the name of the block. The investigation of that land was applied for by my hapu, Ngatipari. Ngatihuia were the objectors. And when the Court gave its decision a portion went to Ngatipari,