

have confidence that I am in a position and am willing to help them. It is true that this very spot upon which we all are at the present moment is historical, from the fact that the two canoes came here—one the Arawa, and the other Matatua. You have reminded me of the fact that those who came in the canoes were all *rangatiras*—all chiefs. Now, when these canoes landed here, the people who were in them had left their own lands, and had only one idea, and that was to improve their condition and to make a home for those who were left behind. There was only one good feeling in the breasts of all—only one good desire, no ill-feeling existed. They were all as one man, and so that continued for many years. The first trouble that came over them was in connection with the land. Then the Europeans came, many years afterwards, and further trouble arose, and that was caused through the men. Instead, then, of agreeing as brothers—instead of living in peace together—because there was quite enough land for all—they commenced to destroy each other. This evil state of things continued for some time there was great loss of life, and many evils overtook both races. Then the forefathers of those present, the chiefs of the Native race, held a conference. They saw that the European race was increasing in large numbers, and the Natives were decreasing, that unless some position was established on a more satisfactory footing it probably meant the extermination of their children. The result of this was the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Now, the principles contained in that treaty were—first, that the Native race was to admit the sovereignty of the British Government—the sovereignty of the Queen—and from that day forward the Native race were to be her children just the same as the pakehas, that their welfare was to be attended to, that they were to have protection that no one else should interfere with them, and that she—the Queen—would give them the same protection she gave her liege subjects at Home. And she conceded that they were to be the owners of the land. There were also certain privileges conceded as regards the fishing rights which had been established, and which it was considered good for the Native race should be reserved to them your forefathers at the same time agreeing, on your behalf, that in dealing with their lands they were only to deal through the Government—that is, the Queen. The wisdom of that course has been apparent, because wherever there has been a departure therefrom trouble has overtaken both races. We must all, therefore, admit that the principles of that treaty originated with men who knew what they were doing—men who could see a long distance ahead, and I am sure that if some of your forefathers had only had an opportunity they would have left some mark behind to prevent a departure from this treaty, and would have taken steps on behalf of the Native race—would have left some command—so that a departure could not have taken place. This day the Government—Her Majesty the Queen, and those under her who are governing this country—are quite prepared—and I speak on their behalf—I say it is our desire to maintain the position that was then agreed upon by both races. I also desire to inform you of this that I am sure Her Majesty's representative in this colony, the Governor, is very pleased indeed that I, as head of the Government, with my colleague here, have gone to considerable trouble and endured fatigue to visit Her Majesty's subjects, the Native race, in all parts of this Island, and the reason we consider this journey necessary arises from the fact that there is nothing like meeting people face to face, by opening our minds to each other, by speaking to each other as men desirous of doing good to both races—it is only by this that good can obtain. It may have been instilled into your minds—some one may have told you—that the Prime Minister was an enemy to the Native race, or that I was a person who had no kindness in my disposition, that I would not listen to the Natives, or treat them as I would the pakeha. Now, it is to me just as much pleasure to meet you, to hear you speak your minds to me, and to know your minds—I say it is just as much pleasure to me as though I were meeting a number of Europeans, and they were speaking their minds to me. Even before your words of welcome were interpreted to me I could see by your manner and the way in which I was received here to-day, that you were all glad to meet me. I knew that I was amongst friends; and I want you to understand clearly that in me you have a sincere friend—not one who will use smooth words to you, use words which have no meaning—one who will make promises to you and not perform them—but one who wishes to treat you as a father would treat his children—telling them what is in their best interest determined to do nothing but what is in their interest. You told me to-day you were like orphans waiting for their father to arrive that you recognised in me, as head of the Government and head of the colony, one who would see to the orphans of this district. Of course, we are only speaking figuratively, still, at the same time, now that I have seen the district and the condition in which you are in, I should say you are orphans—in fact, I should say you are as step-children whose father has not been kind to them. Now, the fault does not lie with those who have been in the same position I occupy—there have been many Governments and many Native Ministers—but the fault does not lie with the Government—the fault lies with the Natives themselves. They have not agreed amongst themselves they have remained, as it were, antagonistic to the Government, antagonistic to the pakeha. Not by openly resisting the laws—though there has been resistance to what the Europeans intended for your welfare—your minds have been poisoned by designing persons, and you have refused to listen to your best friends. You are wealthy beyond your own knowledge, rich beyond conception, if you only knew it. If any of the Europeans in this country owned as much land as you Natives here, they would be considered—and actually would be—very wealthy persons indeed. And yet, what do I find? I find, on looking all round, that there is no prosperity—in fact, the Natives scarcely know where their food for the season is to come from. You go on like that year after year, your numbers are dwindling down gradually, and you are surely passing from off the face of the earth. Now, I am grieved, as head of the Government,—and I speak for Her Majesty the Queen and for her representative here in the colony,—when I say that all her subjects are sorry to see a noble race passing away, and those who remain in the state of almost abject poverty in which we find them, and I am sure your wise men, your chiefs, see that they are passing away—see that the young children are dying off, that men do not live to mature age as they used to, but see sickness and ill-health overtaking them. Your wise men, I say, see this just as well as I do. Your pakeha neighbours who are living near you, and