

*"The Demands of the Natives."*

"Tana Tamehana, *alias* Taingakawa, chief of the Ngatihaua Tribe (Premier of Native Parliament, and second son of William Thompson, the celebrated king-maker), was the first speaker. He said that their first request was that the Premier should remove all taxes from Native land, and their next request was that he should no longer allow the Native Land Court to have jurisdiction over Native land. The Natives likewise wished to have returned to them certain lands which had been handed over to the Government for school purposes and had never been utilised. They now wanted their lands back, in order that they might apply them to other purposes. Moreover, it was their desire to be relieved entirely from the dog-tax, and that the chiefs and hapus should be allowed to decide whether surveys should be made or not over their lands, and that Acts for the settlement of the land by the Government should not affect Maori lands. They also wished that Native tribunals should be left to deal with cases arising between the Maoris themselves, and that the Maoris should have representation on the Bench in respect of cases between Natives and Europeans. It was also their wish that Europeans should be prohibited from lending money to Natives.

"The Premier, in reply, said he had come a long distance to meet them in response to their invitation. He had listened attentively and had noted down all they had said, but there were much larger questions quite untouched that he knew they wanted to speak about. If what they had said so far was all they desired to speak about, it had not been worth while for him to come there, but he knew there was something more important behind. He recognised in them the mouthpieces of the Waikato Natives, and he expected and invited them to speak their minds freely. He wished to know how they desired the land to be dealt with—whether tribally through committees appointed for the purpose by themselves or individually. Only the other day a serious breach of the law had occurred in the Lower Waikato, by which they had defied the majesty of the law, and had injured themselves. He desired to know how far they were connected with this breach of the law. This was the first time the Maoris had a visit from a Native Minister who was also Premier of the colony. It was his desire to be Minister for the Maoris, and not Minister against the Maoris. He could only help them by their trusting himself and the Government, and being frank and open. He was, therefore, prepared to listen to all they had to say. After they had said all they wished, he would explain to them the mind and intentions of the Government.

"Tutua te Ngakau said that, although the matters so far spoken of had often been brought under the notice of the Government, no reply had ever been received from the Government. The Premier's question as to how they wished their lands to be dealt with was met by Tana's request that surveys should only be allowed by the chiefs and the hapus, and so also should the settlement of the people upon the land. It should rest with the chiefs and the Native people who owned the land. With regard to the recent trouble to which the Premier had alluded, they knew nothing about it, and Tawhiao was also ignorant of it. The reason he had for saying this was that he had received a letter from Tawhiao, who stated when in Auckland recently he saw the chief Hori Kukutai, who told him there was considerable trouble in connection with Opuatia Block, which was owned by his tribe, and that the person causing the trouble was Kerei Kaihau, *alias* Te Maihau. Tawhiao, in reply to Hori Kukutai, said, 'Send that man (Kerei Kaihau) back to his own people. You are the person to manage affairs in regard to Opuatia. This was all that had taken place between Tawhiao and Kukutai.

"The Premier Very good.

"Wiremu Paitaki (Ngatipaoa), Waata Tipa (Ngatipaoa and Thames), Pohutuhutu (Ngatipaoa and Piako) also spoke to similar effect.

"Te Puke (an important chief of the Waikato Tribe) supported Tana's views in respect of the matters he had brought forward. A matter that affected them all in the Hukanui district was the dog-tax. The collector came along, and as he was unable to speak Maori the Maori women could not understand him. All the collector could say was 'I'll shoot! I'll shoot!' which put the women and children in great fear.

"The Premier said that Tawhiao had departed from the understanding to be present at this Hukanui meeting, assigning as a reason that he had a dying relative at Ngaruawahia. Was the case of one sick man more important than the case of all the Natives, who complained of being very sick indeed on account of their land? He left that for Tawhiao to decide. He had arranged to receive a deputation of Europeans at Ngaruawahia, and if Tawhiao were present he would see him also.

"Mr Carroll then addressed the Natives, introducing into the speech a Native *waiata* suitable to the occasion.

"At this stage an adjournment was made to lunch, which was served in approved pakeha fashion in a building specially erected for the occasion, and very neatly constructed.

"The meeting having been resumed, Tu Makere complained of the deduction of 3,000 acres from the grant of 7,000 acres returned confiscated land given to William Thompson.

"The Premier promised to inquire if the details were sent him.

"Several other personal matters were brought forward, and inquiry promised, the Premier saying that legislation would be introduced next session to authorise exchanges of Native land and the consolidation of Native interests.

*"Mr Seddon's Reply"*

"The Premier then replied generally, expressing great pleasure at the cordial welcome accorded him. The Government, he said, were determined to remove the Native difficulties, and the Natives could all assist if they would but help themselves. The Government requested from them their assistance. This was his object in travelling through the Island and meeting the Natives face to face. That day they had followed the example of the Europeans in banqueting him and his