

colleague. He accepted this as a compliment paid to them, to their representative capacity, and as evidence of their goodwill. He would speak plainly to them. They might not agree with all he said, but at any rate they were his sincere convictions.

*“ The Native-land Difficulty.*

“ The Premier then referred to the increase of the European population, and the urgent necessity for land, the gradual impoverishment and decadence of the Natives through recklessly parting with their land to private persons, and the paramount importance of effecting such adjustment of matters as would insure the solution of the present difficulties, and the rapid and systematic settlement of the surplus Native lands. The European population was like a lake constantly increasing in volume with no outlet. The Natives were like the banks of the lake, and if no outlet was provided for the banked up waters the time would come when they would break down their banks and sweep everything before them. The flow of water could not be arrested, but the banks could be preserved if the Natives would listen and act according to wise counsels. By the Treaty of Waitangi their forefathers had ceded sovereignty to the Queen, and secured the powerful protection of the British flag for themselves and their descendants. No other nation on the face of the globe had ever protected the aboriginals like the British nation. Those who remained loyal remained in peaceful possession of their lands; those who rebelled had become landless and poor. There could not be two powers in New Zealand. The authority of the Queen was supreme. There could not be two Parliaments, but only one, in which Natives and Europeans were both represented. There could be only one Premier, the head of the Government of the colony. Various districts possessed so-called or mock Parliaments, for the discussion of political questions, which mock Parliaments had mock Ministers. So, too, the Maoris had Parliaments. Te Whiti had one, there was another on the East Coast, and a third here in the Waikato. All these were merely advisory bodies having neither legislative nor administrative power. The Maoris were represented both in Parliament and in the Cabinet by persons of their own race. If more Governments were permitted in the colony than one their lives would be endangered, and everything end in confusion.

*“ The Opuatia Disturbance.*

“ The first news he got on arrival at Te Kuiti was the news of the arrest of Natives at Opuatia for defiance of the law. It deeply pained him. At great discomfort he and his colleague were engaged in a mission in the interest of the Natives—strengthening the banks of the lake, in fact, while other Natives were digging trenches in those banks, thus undoing the good work. If lives had been lost at Opuatia, all the Natives of the colony would have been punished—not physically, but by distrust taking the place of feelings of friendship and goodwill between the races. Mr. Carroll and himself were labouring earnestly to promote the best interests of the Maoris, but occurrences such as he alluded to would tend to neutralise all their work. Kerei Kaihau and his associates had done the Native people more harm than had happened for years. When he (Mr Seddon) told the Parliament how good and sensible and peaceful and progressive the Maoris were, the acts of Kerei Kaihau and his people would be thrown in his teeth. If the Native Parliament or Tawhiao had any power, why did they not prevent Kerei Kaihau and his associates acting as they had done, seeing that their interests were at stake? At any rate, an all-powerful Government had stepped in and the wrong-doers were now in custody. It was very satisfactory to him to receive their assurance that day that Kaihau's proceedings had been discountenanced by them. Were the Maoris degenerating? If not, why put forward their women to do wrong, while the men hide behind bushes? Was it because they were ashamed, or because they thought the punishment would be less severe for women? In that they were mistaken. With Europeans a stigma would be attached to the families of those who were sent to gaol. The same taint would attach to the families of Maoris sent to gaol. Therefore, let them not disgrace themselves by the cowardly conduct of inciting their women to do that for which they would be sent to gaol. Kaihau's action was more reprehensible seeing that he knew the Premier was approaching, and would listen to all grievances.

*“ The Cause of the Disturbance.*

“ In respect to making roads through Opuatia, if the surveyors did wrong, there was the Supreme Court to appeal to. By the 245th section of the Counties Act of 1886, all Native roads and tracks, whether surveyed or unsurveyed, were roads within the meaning of the Act, and roads, too, could be taken by Proclamation through private lands. (By the aid of a plan the Premier showed the need of taking a road through the Opuatia Block, so as to bring Tuakau and Raglan into closer communication.) Kerei Kaihau and his people had no right in that block, and should not have dared to interfere between the owners and the Government. The Government must and would carry out the law. The road when made would be used by Natives and pakehas alike, and, like other roads, belonged as much to the Natives as to the pakehas. This road would be made, and he hoped to have the assistance of all right-thinking Natives in putting it through. The land that would be improved by it was all Native land. If there was any further wrongdoing the guilty parties would be severely punished.

*“ Taxation.*

“ With reference to the requests put forward by Tamehana, the pakehas just as much as the Maoris wanted to escape taxation, but the Government could not do without money and taxes therefore must be imposed for the benefit of both races. As to the objections to local rating, the Natives had only to pay half-rates, and where they were too poor the Governor had the power to exempt them altogether. Any cases of hardship could therefore be submitted to the Native Minister.