

Wiremu Komene I object to the principle of section 24.

The Premier You would have to see the Public Trustee, and get the proceeds invested, and under that Act guarantee the interest and principal and insure safety. It would be dealing with this land as we find the Europeans do with their money. They give the Public Trustee money voluntarily—aye, thousands of pounds to invest.

Wiremu Komene As regards section 26—although you have already dealt with it—it is unsatisfactory, particularly the last paragraph, where it gives the Government the right to refuse to remove such Proclamation or not. The Governor may, by Order in Council, give effect to the removal of such Proclamation.

The Premier It is compulsory. It is this: "On a proclamation being revoked the Native owners of the land held under unrestricted title within the area formerly proclaimed may thereafter dispose of the land either by sale or lease, and not otherwise, to any person whomsoever, provided that such land is first submitted to public auction, and that no larger quantity of rural land than six hundred and forty acres of first-class land, or two thousand acres of second-class land, or ten thousand acres of pastoral land, shall be put up for sale by auction in any one lot, and for this purpose the land shall be first classified by the Waste Lands Board of the district in which it is situate, and thereafter be offered for sale under the provisions of section sixty-seven of 'The Land Act, 1892.'" It is imperative.

Wiremu Komene Section 31 is unsatisfactory.

The Premier Will you point out how it is unsatisfactory?

Wiremu Komene The sales of land for cash—how are transfers effected? The machinery clause and look at section 22—we object to the principle involved therein. With reference to those who do not elect to sell, that they have to give notice of their objection, and failing to give such notice their silence is taken as their consent thereto. If the notice is given they have their remedy by applying for partition in the Native Land Court. That would entail great expense. Both ways are unsatisfactory.

The Premier You blow hot and you blow cold. You ask a question in regard to section 4 as to what was to become of the Natives who do not want to sell. Were they bound by the majority? and that if they were bound by the majority they were unfairly treated. Section 22 gives them an alternative to keep their land and have it partitioned. Why should the minority say, we will neither sell nor lease, nor will we have our own land defined. I say to take up such a position as that is unfair, and will not be tolerated for one moment. They will not go on the land themselves and cultivate it because they do not know which is their land. They will not lease, they will not sell, they will not let any one else go on the land. Practically, they want to keep the land in a state of nature. It is that which has killed more people than have been lost in battle, or who have suffered from disease. It is that which is wiping the Native race from off the face of the earth. If each had their own land and their rights defined they would know what they were doing. But they are now living in an absolute state of poverty, degradation, and hunger. If you take up this negative position you are strangling the Natives by degrees. You will not trust the rangatiras—you will not even trust yourselves, but you take up a negative position. I say you are destroying the tribes, you are destroying the race. If we had this great question settled and the titles to the land ascertained, so that the Natives would know what they were doing, I believe it would be the regeneration of the Native race. They would have comfortable homes and food and good clothes for their children. They would have an assured income, and want would never come to their door. It therefore comes back to this—that the few must not injure the many.

Hone Heke (to the Premier) They say that you have given answers to all their questions about the Act, and that there is no need to go into anything else. It would be better now to refer to the different local grievances.

The Premier Perhaps they will discuss amongst themselves the other matters of detail in connection with the Act and send a letter down to me with the details, and I will get them gone into carefully in Wellington, and give them just as much attention as I would give them to-day.

Local Grievances.

Wiremu Katene You say that if there is nothing more to be said in reference to the Land Act you would like to hear any personal grievances. I quite approve of the suggestion you have made, that we should consider the Act and forward your suggestions whereby our objections could be made clear on the different matters contained therein, and we think we can suggest improvements and alterations. We are quite prepared now to reply to some of your remarks, but perhaps we had better take time to consider the matter and forward you the result of our deliberations.

The Premier You have heard my explanation. You can discuss matters, and send me the result.

Wiremu Katene We will consider in the direction you suggest, and the result of our deliberations we will give to our representative, who will take them down to Wellington.

Wiremu Komene This is in reference to the dog-tax. We want to know whether you sent instructions to the Magistrates to inflict punishment upon those who refused to pay the dog-tax.

The Premier The Government never gave instructions either to the Magistrates or the Judges of the Supreme Court or of the District Court. These Magistrates and these Judges are simply machines. They carry out the law as passed by Parliament. It is Parliament that gives the instructions.

Wiremu Komene The reason we are not paying the dog-tax is on account of sections 3 and 5 of "The Dog-tax Registration Act, 1880, and the amendment Act of 1882. The people that refused to pay the dog-tax include all the kaingas about Otawa. I will quote some portion of sections 13 and 5 of "The Dog-tax Registration Act, 1880," and the amending Act of 1882. Mr Clendon will know these sections. Section 13 gives us power, in the event of our objecting to pay the tax, to hand the dogs over to the police to be destroyed.