

to hand you over to the land-sharks. We intend to remain true to your forefathers. They saw the ills that would happen to you if you were left in the hands of designing persons, and hence by the Treaty of Waitangi you must deal with your lands only through the Government. If we were to agree to what you propose it would be almost sufficient to make the voice of your forefathers issue from the grave and cry, "Shame! shame! shame! We signed the solemn Treaty of Waitangi with you that our people should be protected for all time against themselves. Why have you broken the treaty, and handed over our people to the pakeha-Maori and the wrongdoer?"

Te Waru The point rests more in respect to us leasing under the law. Before a European tenant can take possession of a lease from the Natives of any piece of land he has to pay stamp duty on the capitalised value for the term of that lease. This would press very heavily upon them, and depreciate the value of the land. I ask that we should be allowed solely to lease—that is to say, no one else should have the leasing but ourselves. It is not a question of who should lease, but the question is, when we do lease let the law be light.

The Premier There is no such expense if the lease is done under this Act.

Te Waru As I read it, all expenses incurred on this land will be paid when the lease is taken.

The Premier There is no such thing as stamp duty under the present Act. Under the original Act the expenses were, I grant, heavy. If a road is constructed through the land it improves its letting-value. You will find under this Board, when it fixes the value of the land, additional value is given by having the road, and hence you will have the same benefit as the Europeans. I am glad I came to-day, because you do not understand the law.

Te Waru The Europeans have the roads right up to their doors. The Natives have no roads at all, and why should they pay half-rates?

The Premier It is no use speaking against the fact. The Natives have just as much use of the roads as the Europeans. Their land is only taxed if within five miles of the road.

Te Waru There is no land further away than five miles—only land that has not gone through the Court.

The Premier I may tell the people here that your knowledge is very limited. You cannot speak for all parts of the North Island, because we have a map showing what land is rateable, and if you say the land is not within five miles of a road, and has not gone through the Court, you do not know anything about it.

Re te Tai We have heard all you have had to say to-day, and you have said we should give our grievances to you. I rest on that one saying of yours to-day—telling us that we should meet and confer together, and that we should have one petition and send it to the Government. On that head I now make a prayer to the Premier and the Hon. Mr. Carroll. It is that they will agree to sanction a Bill that will be framed by the Natives of this Island. Any Bill or Bills that the Maoris may get up will be placed before you in the next Parliament. I ask you now whether you will sanction any Bill got up by us and the big meeting when they are all unanimous?

The Premier When you close the proceedings I am quite prepared to give you a very complete reply, and my reply is, as I told you, the Parliament of New Zealand is as open to you as it is to me. If you have a Bill drafted, and you have one of yourselves, or any European member, to introduce that Bill, or is desirous to do so, the power of the Parliament is there, and it can be introduced. The Parliament receives all Bills. They are moved for the first time to be introduced, so long as they are respectfully worded—then they are read, or refused to be read, a second time; but I have never yet known or heard of a Bill being refused to be introduced that was at all reasonable. I have no doubt the Bill would be discussed. If it was not considered to the advantage of the colony to pass it it would be rejected. If it was against the Constitution, or if it was unconstitutional in its provisions, it would be thrown out. If it was against the interest of the two races, then it would be thrown out. If it was an improvement upon the existing laws, and the majority in Parliament considered it was a wise thing to pass it, why then it would pass. You must be prepared to abide by the decision of the majority. In that spirit I understand from the speaker a move will be made in this direction. If in your Bill you ask to have a Parliament of your own—to ignore the present Parliament and to set aside the authority of the Queen—I tell you now at once it would not be allowed to be introduced. There can only be one Parliament and one authority in this country and that is the authority of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. Your forefathers ceded this, it was in your interests, and it is in the interest of us all to maintain that position. I shall be very pleased myself to see in what way you will shape the proposed legislation. It will be a very concise way of ascertaining your views upon the questions that affect you; but, as I have told you, Parliament is open to you, and it is to Parliament you must look for redress. If Parliament does not see its way to agree to what you propose, as loyal subjects of the Queen and as colonists you must submit with good taste, and believe it is all done for the best. My last words to you now are, and my first words to-day were, Look to Parliament, and I feel sure Parliament will do what is right.

Here the Natives proposed to adjourn for tea, but the Premier said the matters they were engaged upon were more important than tea. When a jury is doing the business of a country the authorities lock them up until they have finished their business. They had just arrived at a very important stage in the proceedings; their thoughts were working well—it would be a pity to disturb their thoughts by loading their stomachs.

Hone Heke: In trying to cut everything as short as possible, after they have said everything in respect to the Act passed last session, there is a suggestion for the Natives to put down any such suggestion they see fit on paper and send it to Wellington. I think before concluding with the different Acts referred to to-day, and proceeding to grievances with reference to the surplus-land question, is not the mind of the Natives at the present time, and it would be better for them to quote the cases in view and then follow with other matters. That would be the shortest way to dispose of everything for the present.