

connection with this matter to you. I must express my pleasure at the invitation given us to forward our complaints and grievances to the place where, you say, they should be sent, and that such will receive your careful consideration. You also mentioned that former Governments have not acted in the manner you have done—by coming to visit us, enduring hardships, and taking the trouble to listen to our complaints. I am further pleased at the good advice you have tendered to us to-day in which you instanced the bundle of sticks, which, when bound together could not be broken, but, when taken individually stick by stick, were easily broken. Your remarks in that direction have given me the fullest satisfaction, and your assent also to the lines suggested by Wi Papa with reference to a general meeting of the Natives, at which they might formulate a Bill to submit to the Government. That general meeting for that purpose will be akin to the advice you gave us about the bundle of sticks. Such a Bill will proceed from an organized body. My approval of your utterances to-day is further strengthened by your reminding us that the Parliament of this colony is approachable by the two races of this colony and I hail with satisfaction your announcement that any step we may take in the direction of formulating a measure comprising our ideas on the subject of legislation—that is, if we send such a measure down to the Parliament of the colony—will be carefully scanned and scrutinised by all sides of the House, and, if any good can result therefrom, you will assist in framing and making an accomplished fact an Act that will be beneficial to the Native races. You will have earned the goodwill, good feeling, and entire approval of the Native people. There is a meeting already fixed to which all the representatives of the Maori people of both Islands are invited to attend. That meeting will be held at Gisborne on the 12th April, and at that meeting will take place what has been mentioned already—namely, a Bill will be drawn up by the Native people. With reference to what you have discussed with us to-day, referring to the Acts, it is settled that the people here, after your departure, will consider all the various points brought out during the *korero*, and they will communicate with you further on. At the same time these matters that have been brought forward by Peti, and all such matters, will be forwarded on to you. The Bill that the Native people intend to frame will be submitted to Parliament through the hand of their Native representative. I have come to the end of my speech, and I will conclude by wishing long life to yourself and your colleague for having met us here to-day.

The Premier. Men, women, and children of the Native race, my last words to you to-night are these. As I started to-day with a friendly greeting, I now wish you a hearty good-bye. I have counselled you as a friend. I have indicated to you on what lines legislation would be in your interest, and if you keep to these lines and are reasonable in your proposals there is all the better chance of making such amendments in the law as may be considered necessary in the interests of both races. Because I am in this position I know the minds of the Europeans just as you know the minds of the Native race. Just as, if you attempt when the river is in flood to put a barrier across it, the waters will wash the barrier away, so if you make unreasonable proposals they will be washed away. I therefore counsel you to think well of the words I have spoken to you to-day. I have indicated to you, first, that we desire to preserve the race. Secondly, I have told you the present condition of affairs can no longer continue. Thirdly it is necessary for the protection of the race that you should be defended against the pakeha-Maori land-sharks, and that evils are bound to arise if there is free trade in Native lands. And, lastly, I tell you that if (as we have in the North of Auckland) large tracts of country remaining with the titles unascertained, complications become so great that we do not know who owns the land, and every day this is continued is so much to your injury. But there is something in what you have said to-day in regard to the expense incurred. And when I come to this subject, and meet my colleague and discuss the question with him, and we both agree that these expenses should be lessened (and the cheaper we can make them the better), I would, with a view to lessening the costs, bring the Court and the Judges to a place like this, where there are no publichouses and no evils you might fall into. I would bring the Courts to the doors of the owners, and would, as far as possible, keep the pakeha-Maoris from being with you when you are discussing the question of your land. It would be just as well that you should keep clear of the lawyers. I would again remind you of the bundle of sticks. What has caused you some expense and lost you more land than enough is due to your quarrelling amongst yourselves. Not only that, but when the question of titles comes up your neighbour may want a rehearing of the Court, and all the time your land is going from you. My heart has bled when seeing the Natives dragged into the towns to rehear complaints. They have been there week after week and month after month, while all their substance has been vanishing. I have known them in the Courts kissing that good book the Bible, and at the same time while kissing with their lips they have told lies and perjured themselves. I would sooner see a slow disease over the land than see what I have seen in respect of their land when going through the Courts—the men there drinking, quarrelling, fighting among themselves, and all of the one race. Their wives and daughters keep in the towns, acquire bad habits, and in some cases are defiled. After meeting each other, and keeping as I told you to-day, adjusting matters as between friends, if there is a little dispute, it is better to come and talk it over and come to a mutual agreement, than to be impoverished, and to find your lands going away to those who prey upon you. I have to-day kept my word. I am a man that does not promise much, but any promise made I always perform. I told you to-day that I would open my mind to you, and speak plainly to you, and I think you will agree with me I have kept my word. On the other hand, I am very pleased you have opened your minds to me, and that we have discussed matters reasonably, and I think mutual good will result from my having paid you a visit. I have many more places to go to and many more Natives to see, hence the necessity for my leaving you much earlier than I wished. I would have liked to have stopped with you longer and enjoyed your hospitality, but, though distance may separate our bodies, our minds, I hope, will be working in the same direction—namely, the improvement of the condition of the Native race in this country—that they may live in peace, contentment, and