

should be agreed to by the Parliament. As the Maoris, tribes, and hapus claim that they suffer an injury at the hands of the Native Land Courts, they pray that the Native Land Court be abolished. Then, with regard to that part of the petition which requests that the House will take steps to prevent the further purchase of Native lands, this Committee no doubt realises the vast amount of injury that is done to the Natives under the present existing land-purchase system; and we also consider that, when one realises what a very small balance of land remains in the possession of Maori owners now, it is further necessary that the Government should set apart reserves out of Crown land in order to provide land for landless Maoris. But I do not think that perhaps there is any necessity for me to delay the Committee by going into any lengthy explanation with regard to these matters. The House and this Committee have had the matters set forth in the petition so often explained to them that they must understand the petition thoroughly well; and if the Government have any real desire to meet the wishes of the two sections of the Maori people, and pass such legislation as will meet with the approval of the House, then we will be quite willing and agreeable that such a measure should be discussed. I would point out that this petition expresses the wishes of the ten thousand people who are in support of the Maori Council Bill, and what we wish is, and what we hope to see is, that Bill dealt with, and such parts of it as may be found to be suitable to the necessities of the present occasion shall be combined with whatever other suggestions may be drawn up, so as to bring down a short measure that will meet the present case. That is why this petition is being presented now, with a view to obtaining a sort of combination of the provisions contained in both the Maori Council Bill and the Government Native Land Board Bill. Of course, I may say to the Committee that if the Government does not intend to give any consideration to the wishes of the ten thousand people who petitioned last year in support of the Maori Council Bill and against the passing of the Land Board Bill—if the Government does not propose to in any way consider the wishes of those ten thousand inhabitants of the Western Maori District—then I say there is no object in our giving our assistance to any part of the Government Native Land Board Bill, because there is a very large and numerous section of the community—of the Maori people—who are not in accord with the Government idea as to the Native Land Board Bill. Mr. Heke, I fancy, may be able to explain to this Committee what are the views held by his people resident over the whole of the Northern Maori District. Therefore I say that I hope this Committee will look into the matter from all points of view, and will decide upon the course that they will follow, and report to the Government, requesting the House to bring in such a measure as will meet with the views of the Maori residents of the North Island. I do not think that it is necessary for me to say more. One of the petitioners is present, and he will make a statement.

4. *The Chairman.*] Would it not be better if Mr. Kaihau would express his views on what he wants?—Yes; if the Government had made up their minds in the direction I suggest, I would do so.

5. The Committee would like to hear Mr. Kaihau's views first?—Very well, then. First of all, appoint a Maori Council, so that they will be enabled to deal with their lands in such a manner as may seem to them to be best for the benefit of the Maori people. When they shall have satisfied the House that they are carrying out the provisions of the law with regard to this Runanga Council which we ask for, and the Maori Council having been granted—that is to say, the authority to constitute a Maori Council having been granted—then we must be given power to elect members to form that Council, such members to have power to manage and deal with all matters in regard to land questions affecting the people. Matters of social economy and the regulation of all matters; in fact, in connection with everything—money, crops, land negotiations, and transactions of every kind which affect the welfare of the people.

6. This Council to be composed entirely of Maori people?—I have no doubt that, if the House would see its way to agree that the Council should be composed of Maori members only, they would be found to be entirely competent to carry out the business of the Council.

7. I ask you, Mr. Kaihau, is that the wish?—The majority of the members of the Runanga Council should be Maoris. It might be right that some European should be appointed by the Government or the House to instruct the Maori members; I should have no objection to that. The Chairman, of course, knows that if I have to go exhaustively into all the particulars of matters affecting what we ask for—well, there is such a vast number of them that it would take a very long time. The question of surveys, for example: The Maori Council could control and conduct all matters with regard to the surveys that they might find it necessary to make with regard to the subdivision of their lands, and so forth, so as to do away with the trouble that at the present time exists as the result of the present survey system and Native Land Court system, and they should be given power to make orders empowering action to be taken in all such directions as they might see fit, always having regard to keeping within the laws of the colony; and to set up certain officers to deal with matters of registration and the administrative part of matters that would come under their control, and to enable this Council to make necessary reserves and set aside lands for each separate hapu and group of people, so as to prevent the possibility of their ever becoming "landless Natives." Under the existing order of things no such reserves are made—land is sold right out to the last acre. When the Crown purchases a block they do not offer to say, "Well, now we will make provision by setting apart a portion of that block for you." They purchase a block right out; they do not think of making any provision for the Maori owner. Now, this is a matter which makes the people feel very sore—that is to say, those Maoris who have a desire to see the Maori population of this country progress at the same rate that the European population is doing. The Chairman is aware that a petition such as this was presented to the House at the time that the Maori Council Constitution Bill was before the House. Although the Chairman has asked me to go into the matter, I do not think there is really any object in my going exhaustively into each little matter or detail, because, as I say, it is almost an inexhaustible subject; but when the Bill is gone into, then it will be a question to decide upon what points therein contained do not meet