

sent—are very much wider than anything we are likely to attain this session, still, it will be something gained, and I will endeavour later on to obtain some of the main objects the people ask for. Now, as to the authorities which are proposed to be vested in the Board to be constituted under the Government Board Bill, I cannot altogether see my way to agree to them. However, of course, that is a question for consideration and discussion. My opinion is this: With regard to such a body as a Board constituted in the manner provided by this Bill, I say that such a Board should have no right to take any action on its own immediate responsibility without first having had the matter with which it has to deal laid before it by the people who are personally interested. Now, it is proposed that the functions of a Board shall be, generally speaking, these: It shall have control and the management of all leases, and the general administration of the lands. It will find its hands very full with these functions, and, that being so, I do not think it would be right or proper that such Board should be vested with any of the powers and functions of a Native Land Court. It will be necessary to vest such powers and functions in a separate tribunal. However, I do not propose to speak any longer upon that subject, but I shall now touch upon the question of Native lands—particular Native lands—I mean lands still held under uninvestigated or unascertained title. I am willing, as I have said, that a Board should be constituted to have the control and management of Native lands upon the basis and for the reasons which I have spoken of; and as we understand it is the intention of the Government now to endeavour to put a stop to the further purchase of Native lands, one of the matters most ardently desired by the Maoris seems to be near attainment. Now, with regard to small tracts of uninvestigated Maori land in this country, I say that the present laws with regard to surveying Native lands should not apply to them, because they are so expensive, and such expense becomes an encumbrance, which is undesirable, and many people are prejudicially affected by any action taken by one or more of the alleged owners without the knowledge or consent of the rest. Now, I would suggest that the following course should be taken: Let those hapus who claim to have an interest in these uninvestigated lands select a Committee from amongst themselves, such Committee to meet at an appointed time and place, and thoroughly inquire into and ascertain the outside boundary of such uninvestigated land, its tribal or sub-tribal partitions and family subdivisions. That having been first done, and the external and internal boundaries having been, by that means, definitely ascertained, then it will be quite time enough for a survey to be made of such partitions if desired by the people. It will then be competent for the Committee, which has been selected by the interested hapus, to proceed to exercise its other functions. To pass, for instance, the list of names of the various owners entitled to each respective subdivision of such land. Now, I am myself satisfied that such a system, in respect to papatupu land, as I have outlined is quite within the possibility of accomplishment. I have myself proved such to be the case. I have constituted and worked out a similar scheme, and I say that this system would remove a great many burdens now severely felt, and it would remove a great many causes of trouble that frequently arise between Natives and Natives. I say that if the Committee had once ascertained the tribal boundaries, the hapu boundaries, and so forth, and had passed a list of owners for each respective partition, that that would be all such Committee would have to do, and then it would simply be for them to submit their finding either to the Board or other duly appointed tribunal for confirmation. Then there is the whole matter solved without the excessive charges and irritation following on Native Land Court proceedings; and, as I understand that we are now assembled here for the purpose of discussing matters with a view to discover the most beneficial and least expensive way of securing the welfare of the Maoris, I submit, from my point of view, that this is a scheme which is eminently fitted for the necessities of the occasion, and now that I understand the present intention I may say that I am prepared to concede a good deal of what I would wish to see accomplished with a view of having the views of the Government in this matter carried out. I think that is all I have to say.

*Mr. Kaihau*: I thought that we were going to discuss the Petition on which I spoke the other day before this Committee. This is another matter altogether. This is giving an expression of opinion as to the direction which individual members of this Committee think that legislation ought to take, before we have done taking the first necessary step, which is to discuss the subject-matter of the petition before the Committee.

*The Chairman*: I thought the object in presenting these petitions to the House was for the purpose of getting the views of the representatives of the Maori race, on this Committee, as to what form the legislation should take in order to limit the evils complained of in the petitions. Mr. Kaihau expressed himself to the Committee in reference to these matters and what he thought the best way of carrying out the wishes of the Native race, the chief prayer of the petition being that the sale of Native land should cease. Mr. Kaihau supported that petition, and gave his views as to what steps should be taken with regard to the particular dealings with the lands. I understand Mr. Heke to-day also supported the chief contention in the petition—that the sale of Maori land should cease. He has also expressed himself as to how European dealing with Native lands should be carried on. Thus we have the views of the two Natives representing the Western and Northern Divisions. Now, the Committee are anxious to get the views of the Eastern District represented by Mr. Wi Pere. Then, I think it would be the duty of the Committee to endeavour, as far as possible, to reconcile any difference of opinion that may have been expressed by the representatives of the Maori race. This appears to me to be the object we have in view now.

*Hon. Mr. Carroll*: I think it is desirable that the various Maori members representing the different districts into which this country is divided should express their respective views on the matter. There is no occasion for them to go into any very lengthy speeches, but simply to give a short, clear, and concise statement of their views with regard to what each of them respectively considers is the necessary legislation that should be undertaken, and then, if we consider it necessary to ask any questions with regard to any matters in which it may transpire that the views of