

say, this man Wi Pere does not know what he is talking about—he does not properly understand the case—because your questions are really only directed to the head of the matter. Well, an eel is an eel from its head right down to its tail, and my reply embraces the whole of the body from the head right down to the tail.

7. Well, then, as a matter of fact, although you say suspend the operations of the Board for a time, you do not really mean to suspend it at all, because you say that, if a man does not work and utilise his land as the Board considers he should do, then it is competent for the Board to take it from him and work the land on his behalf. The inference that I draw from that is that the Act is not to be suspended at all, but the moment it is passed it comes into operation?—The Board will have no power to deprive a man—an energetic man who works and utilises his land—of his land, but in the case of a lazy and idle man they will have the right to take his land from him and work it. This Board is to be constituted for the purpose of utilising the land for the benefit of the owners of the land, because if a Maori's land is left to lie idle it has to pay rates and other demands, and where is the money to come from if the land is not worked? The Board is to watch the people and see how they get on. Supposing a man has a lot of children who are crying out for food, and the County Council is collecting rates from his land, any other little pieces of land he may have other than those he is paying rates for, and it is lying idle, nor is he disposed to spend the money to buy bread for his children, then it is for the Board to watch and see whether such man works his land or not. If he does not work his land to provide food for his children, then the Board must take it from him, and work it for him. I do not mean to say for a moment that the Board is to interfere with a man if he is acting as he should do; but if a man is either too lazy or too incompetent to work his own land for the benefit of his family, then the Board should come down in an amicable way and say, you are not doing what you should or ought to do—we will take the control of the land on behalf of you and your children.

8. Yes; but the reply does not meet my question. However, I will ask another one: How is the Board to be constituted? Are some of the members of the Board to be Europeans, or are they to be all Maoris?—If it is to be a general Board for the district, I should like to see seven members—four of such members to be Maoris, and the remaining three to be Europeans. Then, if there are to be two Boards for the East Coast, I should like to see each Board constituted of three Maori members and two Europeans. But then, again, if there is to be but one Board for the whole of the East Coast Electoral District, let that Board be constituted of four Maori members and three Europeans. The reason that I say that is that the members of these Boards will be paid for what they do, therefore we should see that there are not too many of them appointed. But I think you asked me this question before.

9. Well, you say four Maori members and three Europeans. Supposing the Government say there are to be four Europeans and three Maori members?—Well, I shall still hold out for my contention. If the Government in spite of that pass their own idea, well, then, they will pass it.

10. Do I understand you to say you will still object?—Of course, I will not make any very strenuous objection, but the nature of my objection to pakehas is that they always want as much money as they can possibly get—between £300 and £500 a year. I would be entirely willing that the members of the Board should be all Europeans if they would be satisfied with small pay. I would not be afraid of anything so long as the land-purchases were at once stopped; I should have no fear of the Government or anybody else then, because I should feel that I was not justified in saying, if the members of the Board are all Europeans the land will be taken away from us, because, the purchase of land having been stopped, it cannot be done. The only reason why I would like to see Maoris on the Board is because Maoris are willing to accept very small payment. I do not suppose that these Maoris would be able to do anything satisfactorily at first. They would not know how. When appointed they would have to be instructed by Europeans and learn what they had to do.

11. I heard you say this: that the seven members whom you proposed should constitute this Board are to be paid for what they do. Who is to pay them?—Oh, you have never seen the Premier's Bill.

12. I am asking you a question?—The Parliament is to provide money to pay them.

13. The Government? Are the members of the Board to be appointed by the Government or by the House?—The Government are to appoint the three European members, and are to ascertain from the Maoris the names of the Maori members whom the people desire should sit on the Board. I say that the Government is to have the sole mana, authority, and control of affairs with a view to securing the welfare of the Maori people. The only trouble is that Europeans have a fire which produces money, and the Maoris have not got a fire that they can make money out of; the only fire that they have got is one to boil potatoes.

14. I did not ask you that?—Oh, did not you people (the Committee) hear the question Henare asked me?

15. I am asking you about the procedure with regard to the appointing of members of the Board?—Well, you ask me who will do it. I have said that the Government are the people who have fires that make money, and our fires only cook potatoes.

16. Well, I did not ask you that, as I said before?—Very well, then; I am wrong.

17. Well, now, if these seven people are appointed members of the Board, what do you think would be a proper yearly rate of pay for each man?—I do not think I can reply to that. Let our lord and protector, the House and the Government, say or fix what their payment is to be.

18. No; we are our own lords?—Of course, it is not as though I was lord over these people. If I had the control over these people I should say £5 per man. If they were my servants I should be very much pleased if they would be agreeable to accept £5 per man per year.

19. How could they possibly hope to live upon that £5 per year and travel about the country in the exercise of their duties?—If they agreed to accept it and said it would satisfy them, it would be their look-out.