

Wellington. All this learning and knowledge will be of immense benefit to us in the coming years. And all the school-teachers who came here were and are good men and women.

There is also this: We told the Governor-General Liverpool about some matter that arose on our land; it was this—it was about wanting to get a European member to sit in our Council. We told the Governor-General that we would not agree to this idea, and the suggestion was not to be approved of—never. Therefore we repeat the same to you so you may be clear: we will absolutely never consent to any European getting into our Council. We own all the land here, and the Europeans are strangers living on the land, working for their own benefit. They will not work for our benefit. If they were working for our good and benefit they would not sell their goods to us at such crushing heavy prices as they do, nor would they be so obstinate in offering us such very low prices for our fruit and copra and other produce. This teaches us that they seek only for their own benefit. The European mind is too deep for us—we cannot follow or fathom it.

There is also this: It is during Platts's time that we received good prices for the sale of our fruit and copra—nothing like this has ever been known during previous years—and that those good prices have followed into this year. The year 1919 was a wonderful year for money on this island; the prices we received for our fruit and copra, 'tis beyond belief.

We now see that the Fruit Association we formed on the island is a prosperous and successful work.

We earnestly desire this: that good and suitable steamers come here to take away our fruit to New Zealand. We pray that you will be strong, and help us all you can to develop our lands that they be made to produce food for all.

This is our petition to you, the honourable Minister and the honourable members. Salutations!

(Signed) PA ARIKI (and 109 others—representing
the people of Takitumu).
TINOMANA ARIKI (and 122 others).
KARIKA ARIKI (and 62 others).
MAKEA ARIKI (and 76 others).

The Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN, in replying, thanked the Council for their warm words of welcome. He expressed his pleasure in knowing that the islanders were satisfied with Mr. Platts, the Resident Commissioner the Government had appointed. It was the desire of the Government in making such an appointment to send down an officer who, whilst sympathetic to the Natives, would at the same time do his duty by the Europeans as well. It was very gratifying to find that the islanders were satisfied with the development that had taken place lately, and also with the education, which it was hoped would be extended. With regard to trade matters, these would be discussed in the course of the following deputation, and an opportunity would also be afforded them to place their views before the Trade Commission that was accompanying the party. Advances for land-development would be a subject for the Credit Bank to deal with. This bank, it was hoped, would be established shortly. The question of European representation on the Island Council would be dealt with subsequently. Sir James then invited the members of the Council to bring forward any of the matters that they desired to mention.

LOSS OF MANA.

MOATE, acting as spokesman for the Arikis, asked that the power, the mana of the Arikis and the Mataiapos should be returned to them. They did not know why their mana had been taken away from them. Originally the islanders had asked that their island should be joined with the British Empire, but they had heard that New Zealand asked that they should be included in her boundaries. That was how they became attached to New Zealand, and they believed New Zealand had taken away their mana. The people were previously under the Arikis, now they were free. Now the Arikis and Mataiapos commanded no power whatever: the people now said they were as good as the chiefs and took no notice of their authority.

The Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN suggested this was because of the individualization of the land-titles.

MOATE: The cutting-up of the land had been the act of the Land Court Judge. The Arikis claimed the whole of the land, but the Judge said they had no power over the individual—they had no mana. That was how they had lost their power over the people, and now they were living without mana. That was how New Zealand had deprived them of their mana.

Mr. J. A. YOUNG, M.P. (Chairman, Native Lands Committee in the New Zealand Parliament), said that the custom in New Zealand in individualizing Native-land titles was to grant the chiefs larger blocks than the common people, as their rights were greater. If in the Cook Islands the Arikis were granted a larger share than the common people, would not that prove conclusively that their mana was greater than that of the smaller people?

MAKEA ARIKI: No; I do not think that would suit me.

Mr. YOUNG: Would you indicate how your mana should be preserved?

MAKEA: What we want is to leave the mana to the chiefs.

Mr. HOLLAND, M.P.: What is the explanation of the land-titles at the present time? Does not this trouble arise out of the fact that they had a feudal system in operation before the Land Court came, and what they want to restore is the feudal control of the land?

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: As far as I can gather, the reason why the mana has been lost is because of the individualization of the land-titles.

Mr. Savage was asked to inquire from the Natives and explain to the meeting what the nature of the native-land system was before the annexation of the islands.

Mr. SAVAGE: Previously the land was held by the people from the chiefs. The chiefs had absolute power over the land, and they could put a tenant off if he displeased them in any way. That was the mana they wanted to preserve. On the individualization of the titles under the Land Court each man was awarded his own share of the land; all got their portion. That was the whole position: exactly the same as in New Zealand.

Mr. HOLLAND inquired whether the ownership was feudal or tribal.

MAKEA: Formerly the Arikis had absolute power, the Mataiapos also, over the land—they owned the land. They apportioned it to the people to reside upon, and the tenants had to render