

Natives whom I know personally have given that to me as their reason for ceasing to cultivate, and that was more especially the case a few years ago when Te Whiti's followers were still more in the habit of marching about the country eating up the stores and consuming everything that the industrious Natives had collected together. A sweeping out, in the way I suggest, of the absentees from these various blocks, by giving them in lieu thereof an interest in other blocks where they choose to reside, would gradually cause them to be shown the cold shoulder when they made these visits, and a feeling of safety would be produced in the minds of the Natives who wish to cultivate. They would, I think, soon learn that there was a good chance of their being able to reap an advantage from their labour. This would tend to prevent the distress which prevails amongst the Natives from the scarcity of food in winter time. Before I leave this subject—although I have perhaps extended my remarks rather too much already—I would like to call attention to one great fault in the present law with reference to the at present considerable and gradually increasing number of Natives and half-castes who are far better up in all that pertains to the management of their own business than are the average run of Europeans in the same position of life. I know a very great many who, merely because they happen to be Maoris or half-castes, although they thoroughly understand the English language, and are in many cases Native interpreters, are yet subject to all the restrictions upon the power of alienating or dealing with their lands which are applied to the most uneducated Natives who do not understand a word of English. You will probably know, for instance, Mrs. Simeon and Mrs. Jane Brown. I do not think it would be possible to find any European women in this colony who are so thoroughly conversant with business and so well able to manage their own affairs as are these two women; and yet, will it be believed, when either of these two wishes to transfer land or to transfer mortgages or to vary an ordinary investment of her money, it is necessary for her to go before the Trust Commissioner and to be accompanied by all the formalities prescribed by the law for the safeguarding of untutored Natives. The most simple transaction must be accompanied with all the incidental expenses of advertising and so forth, except only the emolument of the Native interpreter. Otherwise, in relation to the Native Lands Frauds Prevention Act all the formalities must be complied with, and these costs simply absorb a year's interest on an ordinary transaction. I would suggest that this state of things ought not to be allowed to remain unremedied for another year. Such an injustice to such persons ought to be swept away at once.

1272. *Mr. Carroll.*] Would you go a little further, and say that people in that state should be allowed to have their interests individualised and farmed by themselves?—Unquestionably. What I should say is this: that they ought to be put in the same position as regards their lands, and all dealings with lands, as Europeans are, and that wherever persons of that description exist they ought to be individually free from all the disabilities that now attach to the Natives in general.

1273. *Mr. Rees.*] In relation to his Maori land, Mr. Carroll himself is in the anomalous position to which you have been referring. Is it not a monstrous thing?—It is a monstrous thing. I think there might perhaps be a provision that, from time to time, the Governor in Council may cause a Proclamation to be issued, containing the names of such persons as, from their knowledge of the English language and customs, and of business affairs, are fit to manage their own business as if they were not Maoris, and that, from the date of publication of such Proclamation they should no longer be affected by those disabilities which affect the Maori race. Some simple thing of that kind, it seems to me, would meet the case at present, although, as the number obtaining this immunity increased, very probably some machinery less cumbersome when applied to a large number of persons would have to be devised. When it is remembered that, by somewhat similar means we naturalise foreigners at present, it will be seen that it would answer at any rate for some time to come.

1274. *Mr. Rees.*] Then, in time, the position would be reversed. You would have then to specify only those who were to remain under disability?—As time passed on, that will undoubtedly be the case. It will be sufficient to mention in the muniments of title that, in respect of those particular titles, such and such persons are under disability. For instance, when a succession-order falls in on the death of one of those Natives who are not under disability, there will have to be included in the succession-order the statement that the persons named are under the disability, as is done in the case of infants under our ordinary law. Before I come to the general subject of Native lands, which is, of course, of the greatest importance with regard to the welfare of the entire North Island, as distinguished from the questions which specially affect this particular district, I should like to mention another case where, I think, something ought to be done by the Government without delay. That is, the case of lands to which Natives have in the past become entitled, but which have never been Crown granted. There are many such in this district, and particularly close to New Plymouth. You will notice, as you travel about this district, tracts of land covered with furze. A great many of these are Native reserves such as I have referred to, but many also are lands for which the Natives who were really entitled have never obtained grants, in consequence, I am told, of there being no sufficiently accurate survey to enable them to be granted; and as the Maoris are poor, without much influence, their efforts hitherto have been unavailing to induce the Government to go to the expense of surveying these lands with the view of issuing Crown grants; and the result is that year after year they become more and more covered with furze, and a proportionately greater difficulty is experienced in getting Europeans to take up and clear them under an ordinary lease. In these cases I would urge the Government to survey these lands, whether it would follow that Crown grants should be issued or not, and that steps should be taken no individualise the interests of those Natives who are possessed of sufficient knowledge to lease their lands, or to sell them where they do not require them for their own uses or sustenance, so that where there are any of these patches of unremunerative land they may be turned to account. In this way they may be settled by Europeans and cultivated, if they are not required by the Maoris themselves. They have been allowed to be overrun with furze for from ten to twenty years past, and land of this rich alluvial character when overrun with furze for many years becomes almost worth-