

respectively as hereinafter provided. 18. The Clerk of the Council, who shall find good and sufficient security for his intromissions, shall be Receiver of Maori Land Revenue. 19. Until the said account shall be in funds from the sale, letting, and disposal of Maori lands, the Council may from time to time obtain advances in cash to defray the cost of survey and general management of the Maori estate, and the Maori estate shall be a security for the due payment of such advances. 20. The accounts of the Council shall be audited by public auditors, and published in the *New Zealand Gazette* in the Maori and English languages." In order to ascertain who the Maoris are, Part VI. provides that a Maori census should be taken. "21. As soon as conveniently may be after the passing of this Act a Maori census shall be taken in such manner and form as may be prescribed, distinguishing the chiefs from the common people, the chiefs being divided into two classes—that is to say, chiefs of the first rank and chiefs of the second rank. (22.) Chiefs of the first rank shall be entitled to participate in the Maori Estate Fund in the proportion of                   pounds to one pound, and chiefs of the second rank shall be entitled to participate in the said fund in the proportion of                   pounds to one pound, of the common people. (23.) All errors and omissions in the said census may be corrected and remedied by the Council as the justice of the case may require." Probably the greatest difficulty in dealing with the Maori lands is the division of the money, and to bring all to one common agreement. The same difficulty exists in every scheme that may be propounded; but I have found the proposal to give a larger share to the elder chiefs—say £10 to £1—meets with general acceptance. I remember, in one of the election speeches a member said he would buy all the Maori lands with debentures, handing the debentures over to the Public Trustee, and then leaving the Maoris to fight out their claims to the moneys in the Public Trust Office. The Maoris are not likely to be satisfied with any such arrangement as that; at any rate, I could not advise them that it was a fair and equitable mode of dealing with their property. I have endeavoured to persuade them that it would be better for all to take equal shares than to be fighting over the division of the money according to Maori usage and custom. On the whole, I think it will be better to humour the chiefs to a small extent by giving them a larger share than the common people. The chief retains his *mana* and dignity thereby to a certain extent, and as the old people die off the thing will regulate itself, for they will not increase in numbers. I propose, then, that there should be a share, or certificate—call it what you please—issued to each Native, the chief's share being larger than that of the common man. As soon as the rank of each chief has been determined by the census his share would be fixed in accordance therewith, the Board having power to rectify errors. Assuming the census to be complete, then there would be a certificate issued to the first-class chief, a certificate to the second-class chief, and a certificate to the ordinary Maori. I propose that these certificates of shares should be issued as defined in Part VI. of the Bill—viz.: "(24.) Certificates of shares shall be issued to the chiefs and people of the three classes specified in Part VI., as representing the proportionate share to which each holder shall be entitled to participate in the Maori Estate Fund and every distribution thereof." Supposing there are forty thousand Maoris, and that the revenue for the first six months amounts to, say, £40,000, this is £1 a share. Each ordinary man gets £1, while the principal chiefs get £10 each, and the second-class chiefs £5 each—if those are the amounts they agree upon.

2256. *Mr. Rees.*] You do not allocate the claims of the Maoris upon the basis of their individual lands, but upon the total amount of the funds?—Upon the total amount of the funds? No scheme for individualising the tribes on their lands will be satisfactory. To participate in the benefits of that proposed measure the Maoris must adopt it as a whole; and, in my opinion, if there are dissentients on account of some being more wealthy than others, they must be instructed in order to convince them that it is for their good. I know that the Arawas and the Ngapuhis are determined to adopt it if possible. I have a letter here telling me of a large Native meeting at Kaikohe attended by seven hundred men and four hundred women, and that they have appointed a Committee of six to go to Wellington in order to direct their member, Te Mutu, to work for the passing of this Bill. It has been before the country for the last two years, and it has been my endeavour to make it as practicable as possible both for the Maoris and Europeans. I ought also to point out that under this Bill the Maoris cannot waste their estate, or, so far as their estate goes, that they cannot become paupers. Express provision for this is made in section 25: "Such certificates shall not be transferable or assignable, and shall not be available in bankruptcy." If, therefore, credit is given to a Maori, it must be outside the certificate, and upon the strength of other property which he may acquire. I wish to impress upon the Commission that this Bill emanates from large sections of the Maoris; so that if the mode of acquiring the Maori estate for settlement is acceptable to the people, the people should yield to the Maoris the provision for securing their estate for their benefit by the simple process of equal division. I have pointed out to them that the provisions of this Bill are analogous to the formation of a company of forty thousand shareholders for the working and bringing into settlement twelve millions of acres of land, a Council or Board of their own people constituting the directors. Those who have given attention to the matter will understand and appreciate that it will be for the benefit of both races. In proof of this, two years ago there was a large meeting held at Orakei, at which four Ministers of the Crown were present, and resolutions were passed in favour of "union of the laws"—that is, the same laws for the Maori lands as the European lands. What stronger evidence can there be that the Maoris are prepared for this change? I was present at the meeting, and saw the resolutions handed by Major Kemp and Paora Tuhaere to the Native Minister. But what has become of them? I believe that many of the difficulties that now exist between Europeans and Maoris regarding subdivision can be readily settled by the Maori Council. The question of tribal interest will no longer be an element of disagreement, the simple object being to ascertain the portion to which the European is entitled; and the remainder will vest in the Council. I do not propose to interfere with the Native Land Court at present. Probably a standing Commission would be better to determine cases in which the Maori Council cannot agree. In any event, by abolishing Maori usage and custom the principal work of the Native Land Court will disappear, and, of necessity, the Court will disappear also. I consider that the Native Land Court has failed in