

MINUTES OF MEETINGS WITH NATIVES AND OTHERS.

CAMBRIDGE, 24TH MARCH, 1891.

Messrs. W. L. Rees, M.H.R., and Thos. Mackay (Native Land Laws Commissioners) met a large gathering of Natives in the Public Hall, at 7.30 p.m. on the above date, for the purpose of eliciting their views with regard to the subjects into which the Commission had been appointed to make inquiry. Printed circulars, in Maori, detailing the orders of reference, had previously been distributed amongst them.

Pepene Eketone opened the proceedings by saying: This Commission is a new arrangement and the Commissioners are strangers to the Native chiefs that are assembled here this evening—that is to say, chiefs of the Ngatiraukawa, Ngatimaniapoto, and Ngatituwharetoa; and it is in accordance with Maori custom that the chiefs should greet the Commissioners first. It will not be a long proceeding; it will just be of a formal character.

Mr. Rees: We shall be glad to receive the greetings of the chiefs.

Arekatarā Rongowhitiao: Welcome to the Commissioners who have come here to meet the people who are assembled—the tribes of Ngatiraukawa, Ngatimaniapoto, and Ngatituwharetoa. My request has been acceded to, in the fact that the Commission has been appointed to inquire into matters affecting the people in this Island. Here are the people of the Island to welcome and greet you. That is my greeting to you. [The speaker then sang a *waiata*.] You have come in the hope that satisfaction will result from your labours. Here we are burdened with troubles and difficulties. From the old times to the present time the trouble has been upon the people. Welcome, and salutations to you.

Hemopo Hikarahui: Welcome the Commissioners, you who have come here in connection with that work that affects the colony. We, the Natives of this colony, are working the work. We are doing things that are good and work that is difficult. We are glad indeed that you, the Commissioners, have come here, because you can show to those who are blind a proper road to take. That is the reason we greet you, you that can lift up the things that can do good to the colony. During many years we have been working our works, and the burdens now are heavy upon us. And you, the Commissioners, may have light thrown upon the way that will do good to the tribes of this colony, and so that prosperity may result to all, and that the good so accruing may be joined on to the benefits that are already past. Long may you live!

Karanama te Wharahaheke: I belong to Ngatiraukawa. Welcome to you, the Commissioners, who have come here—you who are sent by the great representatives of the Europeans—you who have to look into and investigate the wrongs of the pakehas and the Maoris. The Maoris to some extent possess a knowledge of what is proper, and they hope that what you may suggest will be joined on to the works that the Maoris themselves do. In those years that have passed away no Commissioners came amongst us like you who are sitting there. Now, indeed, our hearts feel glad that you have come here. Welcome. Come and put things straight, that the works of the law may be strictly and properly carried out. That is all I have to say, for there are many chiefs who wish to greet you.

Okiwi Ngatara: Welcome you who have come amongst us, the Natives—you who have come in these days to bring relief to the people. In the beginning the affairs of the Maori people were not clear. In the days that are past the actions of the Government were not good to the Maori people. The Government in those days trampled on the Maori people. I wish to sing a song to you, but it need not be translated. [The speaker concluded by singing a *waiata*.]

Aperahama Patene: I stand up with regard to Waikato. I greet you, the Commissioners, who have come here under the authority of the Governor. My heart is indeed gladdened, because you have come to inquire into the things that have caused the hearts of the Natives to be darkened—that is, the troubles that have arisen in regard to difficulties in connection with sales; and to inquire also into the effect of the administration of the Native Land Court, and with regard to all those difficulties connected with land-dealings. All that I need do now is to express my joy at your being here. But if I am asked I shall be pleased, on behalf of myself and my hapu, to lay before the Commissioners our views with regard to matters that pertain to our interests. I wish to know if the Commissioners will be able to go to all Native places, in order to carry on their investigations. An important Native Land Court, in which we are concerned, will sit at Raglan next month. There, in presence of my hapu, we shall be glad to lay before the Commissioners our views with regard to what they are inquiring into. This concludes my greeting to the Commissioners, who, I am glad to see, are inquiring into the best means for dealing with the matters affecting the Natives so that the good may lie equally between the two races, the Maoris and the Europeans.

Tureiti te Heuheu: Salutations to you, the Commissioners, who have come here under the authority of the Governor—that is, the chief man of the colony, who is the representative of Her Majesty the Queen. There have been many Governors during the years that are past, and who have had control of matters in which Parliament is concerned, but this is the first time that this plan has been adopted of appointing Commissioners under the authority of the Governor to inquire into these matters. That is, according to my observation. This appointment of Commissioners is entirely new, and did not take place in the times of past Governors. Still, I am but a young person, and I may not be clear perhaps as to the proceedings of Governors in former times. So far as I am able to judge, the subjects upon which the Commission is going to inquire under the