

direction of the Governor are proper subjects indeed for inquiry, so that a careful and judicious scheme may be arrived at for dealing with the affairs pertaining to the Natives of this Island. That is, that in the approaching time the things that pertain to the Natives may be carefully inquired into, in order that benefit may result and that the advantages generally may fall upon both Europeans and Maoris—for who can tell whether good or evil may come? I desire to express my keen regard for the action taken by the Governor in so far consulting the wishes of the Natives as to take their views upon matters which relate to them—that is, the administering of affairs in relation to their lands, together with all other matters affected by the laws which bear upon the Native people. That is all I have to say upon this point. Here is another matter that I wish to speak about. I may not be able to-day to lay the whole of my views before you, and perhaps it would be better that I should return to my people at the southward end of Taupo should an opportunity again present itself of seeing the Commissioners. If such should be the case, I would reserve the main portion of what I wish to lay before the Commissioners until I have an opportunity of consulting with my people, but in the meantime I have a few remarks to make to the Commissioners. That would be after I have seen those of my people who are here, and then I would be able to lay fully before the Commissioners our views on matters with which we are concerned. That is all. Salutations to you.

*Hitiri Paerata*: Welcome the Commissioners, representatives of Parliament. Salutations to you. We, the chiefs and people who are assembled here are gladdened in heart at the presence of the Commissioners. Welcome, you who bring hither with you the light, so that you may be able to see into all the corners—that is, into all the affairs of the Native people. Welcome, welcome, you who come from the seat of knowledge. Welcome, you who come from Parliament. Show and make known to us the proceedings of the House. Our hearts rejoice at your having come here. That is all I have to say. Salutations to you.

*Te Rangikaripiripia*: Welcome, the Commissioners who bring with you that which will enable us to see what is good and what is bad—you who bring with you the means whereby good may be done. If you will be able to deal with what is good and what is bad I shall indeed be glad.

*Pepene Eketone*: Welcome, the Commissioners who are here under the authority of the Governor and our Queen. I am glad that you have come to this part of the country to see the Natives assembled. We heard some time ago that the Commission was appointed, but we had no distinct idea as to the nature of its work. I am extremely pleased with this new Government that has adopted this principle of appointing the Commissioners. All the past Governments were clearly aware that there were great difficulties bearing upon the Maori people. But none of those past Governments gave vent to the idea or took such steps as have been taken by the present Government in appointing a Commission to inquire into the Maori grievances. I knew from seeing the terms under which the Commission was to act that that would be the best means of finding out what the Maori grievances are. In relation to all the laws that have been passed by the Government in regard to Maori matters, there have been only four Natives to speak up in the House—that is to say, four Maori members to speak with regard to those laws; and that is why I approve so much of what the present Government has done in sending people amongst the Natives to ascertain their views. I say it is undoubtedly an excellent work of the present Government. This is really the first valuable thing that I have seen done by the Governments. Innumerable petitions have from time to time been presented to Parliament by the Natives in regard to their grievances, and, because the Natives sending them were unable to attend Parliament and represent their cases there, these petitions received no consideration from the Government. That is why I am glad that the Commissioners are here, because we shall be able to explain to them the portions of the laws affecting the Natives of which we disapprove. Perhaps I may explain with regard to a certain law affecting the Natives—that is to say, a law passed by the Government that has recently been defeated—viz., the 15th section of the Act of 1888, which imposes restrictions upon Native lands included within the Rohe Potae. A petition had been forwarded to Parliament protesting against that law, but the Government gave no consideration to it. I shall not detain you very long in saying anything about that. Another thing is with reference to the area for the North Island Trunk Railway. Under the Act of 1889 a vast area of land was placed under restriction as to sale. I say these laws are bad. Let me point out where the evils are. The evil in that law is this: that the Government will not allow the Natives to lease or sell or deal with land with private parties. The Government assume the absolute control of those lands. The evil to the Natives in that is that the Government will offer but small sums of money for that land. The Government will not allow private individuals to lease any portion of that land. The Government, then, has assumed to itself the right of paying for the surveys of those lands, and after they have done that they demand a portion of the land to recoup themselves for the survey outlay. There are many laws that are falling with equal hardship upon the Maoris, but I will speak of them when the time comes for the Commissioners to put questions. That is why I say that there are great evils in those laws; and why I am expressing my regards to the Commissioners is that the Natives will have an opportunity of laying their grievances before the Commissioners, after which the matter can be referred to the Parliament. But if we, the Natives, were left to our own way of laying our grievances before Parliament the cost and expense of so doing would be very great indeed; and that is why I regard the work of this Commission as most important. I shall, however, go further into details when I am giving evidence before the Commissioners. The Commissioners have heard the expressions of regard made by the chiefs, and they are all of one mind in greeting the Commissioners for having come.

*Huirama Tukariri*: I belong to a different part of the country. I desire to express my admiration at the Commissioners coming here. I am surprised and glad at the Commissioners coming here and going into these matters affecting the Natives. We will see what the result of your labours will be. If you have come with regard purely to Native matters it is well. The reason why I say this is that in all past years there have always been difficulties in relation to the Natives. From year