

to year the Natives are petitioning Parliament, but this, of all things considered and required, is the most estimable. Although I am speaking here now, my remarks will have yet to be made with regard to my own part of the country. I am speaking here now in accordance with Native custom. With regard to our own troubles, they will be dealt with in our own part of the country. I do not know whether I shall see you when you are at the Bay of Islands. Let me therefore explain where the difficulties are with regard to my own district. The trouble with the Ngapuhi arose when they permitted the surveys of their land in its native state. This is what arose out of the fighting we had with the Government. This was in the newspaper. When near Whangarei the surveyor went upon the land and trouble arose out of it. At a meeting held in the following March with regard to the Treaty of Waitangi, we had present a representative of the Government. I think it was Sir Frederick Whitaker. He went there, and when they began to speak about the Treaty of Waitangi Mr. Clendon (the interpreter for the Government) said to me, "Go and get that person who has been in trouble about the fighting," and Mr. Clendon said to Taurau that he would take over the trouble with regard to the survey and settle it. Taurau said he was not satisfied; he would adjudicate upon his own trouble. Clendon persisted in what he wanted, but the Government would not consent. Afterwards the whole trouble was adjudicated upon, and the Maoris were the sufferers. It is that sort of work that makes the Natives dread the law. Then he came down here, and some more trouble arose with regard to the land. I told the people they should be careful lest anybody should be killed in that trouble, and in December last I saw the people who wished to fight and prevailed on them to desist. I say that these fightings over surveys should not be allowed to take place. These are evils that afflict the people. That is all I have to say about that, but there are other things, and the people here will know how to deal with them.

*Hauraki Tonganui* : My heart is very glad at your coming here to see the people who are sitting before you. Salutations to you. Your coming here to attend to those things in which we are concerned as well as the Europeans is excellent, because you are the root of the work. Salutations to you, the people who possess sufficient knowledge and are able to deal with these questions. You may be able to lift up the Maori people, who have been in the mud. Salutations to you.

*Mr. Rees* : The Commissioners are pleased at the welcome of the chiefs and people who have assembled here this evening. As many of the speakers have said to-night, this is a new work. For many years all the winds from all parts of the colony have brought to the Parliament many complaints. Petitions without number have come down to the House of Assembly and been considered by the Native Committee. In the Parliament itself very few of the members know anything about Native matters. Some of the members are merchants, who buy and sell goods in the towns. Some of them are shopkeepers, some farmers, and all these people know really little or nothing about the Natives; so when these petitions come before them some say one thing and some say another, because they know but very little of the truth or falsehood of what is contained in the petitions. Then they proceed to make laws—to make fresh Acts of Parliament. Here, again, knowing very little of what they are making laws about, they commit great mistakes, and, generally speaking, the Maori members are divided—two are on one side and two are on the other. So the Europeans do not know what to do, what to say, or what to believe. At last, however, they have asked the Governor to appoint a Commission to go amongst the Maoris—a Commission from the Parliament, appointed by the Governor, to go before the Maoris to meet them face to face and then come back and tell Parliament the truth of these things. Then, when the Commissioners have examined the Maoris, and examined those Europeans who have been working with and amongst the Maoris ever since New Zealand has been a colony, they will report to Parliament, and Parliament, when it gets that report, will at once say, "This is the truth, and we will act upon this." Now, the Commissioners have already examined the first three Judges of the Native Land Court—Chief Judge Fenton, Mr. Mackay, and Mr. Rogan. Then, we have examined gentlemen who were land-purchasers and surveyors back in the early days of the colony, even before Governor Grey's time. And the Commissioners will continue to examine all the Europeans who can give a knowledge of what has been done in the past and who can give good advice as to what should be done in the future. We have already examined some of the Native chiefs, people who have been members of the Houses of Assembly and Assessors of the Court—not very many as yet, but some, at any rate. And we not only shall meet all the people here, but we shall go next week to the Ngapuhi, in the Bay of Islands, then to Otorohanga, then down to Wanganui and into the Wairarapa, and on to Napier, and if there are any other places where it seems possible we can get knowledge from the Natives we shall, as a matter of course, go there also. Now, what this Commission has been told to report upon I will describe. First, it will have to speak of the Native-land laws—for instance, the laws which have been spoken of to-night which stop the Europeans from buying land, and throw it all beneath the hand and control of the Government; then of the law which has altered the old Maori custom of the tribes and hapus dealing with the land as tribes and hapus, and which has made each individual member of them sign deeds—every man, woman, and child. Then we shall have to report how the Native Land Court does its work: first, whether the Natives are pleased with the work of that Court—whether it satisfies them; secondly, whether it does its work properly and well. Now, in regard to the first of these questions about the Court, we shall ask the Natives whether they are satisfied with the fees that have to be paid. We shall then ask the Natives if they are satisfied with being drawn from their homes to distant places in order to attend the sittings of the Court. Then we shall ask the Natives if they are pleased at the continuous adjournments of the cases from Court to Court. Then we shall ask if they are pleased with the continual rehearings which are made in the cases. All these things we shall have to ask the Maoris, and then we shall have to find out whether a better system can be made, which will do away with this expense, do away with the difficulties, and make the