

all of it leased. Then let Parliament appoint for their district a Commissioner, or, if not for their district a Commissioner, a central body of Commissioners, appointed partly by Parliament and partly by the Maoris, to give leases for all these lands, and the Maori Committee and the Commissioner (who is responsible to Parliament) to be responsible for the due distribution of the funds amongst all the owners of the block; so that, if the Commissioner allowed a Committee to misspend the money, the Government would be responsible. In order to provide for the fair distribution of the money, the owners would have to decide amongst themselves as to the respective shares which each hapu or each individual should have. If they could not agree amongst themselves, then let the Court decide what share each is entitled to, and let that be entered on the list. Then the land to be leased or sold in the same way that the Crown lands are leased, the transaction involving no signing of individual deeds, no subdivisions in the Court, but carried out with the least possible expense to the people, so as to leave as much as possible of the proceeds of the land to the Natives. The Commissioner or Government would survey the lands—both the reserves for the Natives and the other lands which were leased; but then the surveys would not be to subdivide the land among individual Maoris, but to cut it up into proper farms so as to lease it just as Crown lands, always excepting, of course, the reserves. You see that would decrease the cost. Instead of having deeds, as now, signed by some hundreds of people, each signature costing £2 or £3, the Commissioner, with the Committee alone, would sign them, but they would be signed in public. The land would be charged with the expense of surveys and of any necessary roads to open up the land for the purposes of making the farms available; but then the best price would be obtained for the land for the benefit of the whole people, instead of each Maori having a few pounds given him as now. The land would not be shut up then to the Government; the Government would not be the sole lessee or purchaser; but the land would be thrown open under these circumstances, either to the Government or to the public. Then the Maoris would deal with their lands just the same as the Europeans do. Now, what we want the Maoris to do is to think about these things; then, to come to-morrow and talk them over, asking questions and answering questions. You see now it has come to this: that all the lands in the Rohe Potae are now going through the Court, and the Government have shut up everything to themselves. The Maoris can do nothing with their lands—they are utterly useless to them; and the Europeans are beginning to clamour out and say, "Oh! a lot of public money has been spent on railways, surveys, and such things: these lands must therefore be taxed." Now, what this Commission has to find out is a way by which the Maoris may get the greatest possible amount for any land they do not want to use, and at the same time that Europeans may get the use of the lands, paying fairly for them, so that they may be taxed and increase the wealth of the country. To attempt to obtain the signature to the deed of each individual Maori interested in a block of land is to attempt an impossibility; that has come to a standstill. Now, what we would suggest is, that the Native people should go back somewhat to the old tribal custom of dealing with their lands all together and in public; that they shall first of all have all proper reserves for their own use, chosen by themselves out of their lands; then that the waste lands, their extra or surplus lands, shall be leased for their own benefit, and yet be advantageous to the Europeans; and that that shall be done in public by the representatives of the people, chosen by themselves and the Government Commissioner, and the proceeds fairly shared out, the Government being responsible for the fair sharing-out of the proceeds. The only charges which would be on the land would be the necessary charges for surveys (and these would be done more cheaply than now) and any necessary roads and bridges, so as to enable people to get on the lands, and that they may fetch a good price. Of course, there would be, as Commissioner Mackay wishes me to remind the Maoris, a small charge for office-expenses; but, while the charge for the survey would be a substantial sum, the other would not be a substantial sum. Arrangements might be made between the Committees and the Government as to fixing a charge for that. That could easily be arranged. Now, if some scheme like that were adopted, the reserves made would be inalienable—the Maoris could not sell or lease them; they would be for their own occupation. The rest of the land would be leased, if the majority favoured that mode of dealing with it, so that for ever there would be a rental coming in to the Maoris. And we shall propose this also: that, if the Maoris choose to improve any of their land by utilising it for the purpose of sheep-farming or anything of that sort, the Government be requested to advance moneys for that purpose to the tribes or to individuals skilful enough to manage for themselves, and of course paying a fixed rate of interest. To-morrow, if anybody would like to ask any questions, the Commissioners will be glad to answer them. To-night, of course, they would answer any questions; but Judge Puckey has kindly consented to adjourn the Native Land Court to-morrow at 10 o'clock, so that we may have the Court and the people, so that then we will answer any questions to make more clear what has been stated, and we will ask questions in our turn so as to draw out the thoughts of the people.

At the request of the Natives, the hour for resuming the proceedings was fixed at 2 p.m. on the following day.

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CAMBRIDGE, 25TH MARCH, 1891.

Pursuant to arrangement, the Commissioners (Messrs. W. L. Rees, M.H.R., and Thomas Mackay) sat in the Public Hall at 2 p.m. to receive the statements of the assembled Natives upon the subjects set forth in the Commission.

*Karanama te Whakahaheke*: I wish to speak of the things that are clear and of the things that are dark—to lay them before you so that you may see which is which. I belong to Ngatiraukawa, and I wish first of all to speak of my land, Huranuipaike. The land has been subdivided, and after it was surveyed it was brought before the Court. The portion which was reserved was marked on the map, and the Court laid down the established boundary. Afterwards the Patetera