Now we come to a most critical and important part of the whole question. It is self-apparent that, however admirable such a measure as the foregoing may be designed or drafted, still, it may become in itself a dead-letter, and therefore useless; and in such case it then, on its part, becomes unfair to the rest of the people of the country. The question, then, is to make it effective to make it apply. In the first place, then, I affirm that we, the owners of the land, have a full right to the full enjoyment of our inheritance, as before stated; but I grant, at the same time, that when we receive its increased advantages we should not enjoy unfairly a favoured immunity from the general taxation borne by any other British subject—in other words, there should be one law for the Maori and the pakeha. My idea, then, is briefly this: First abolish "The Stamp Duty Act, 1882," and then let there be enacted at once, in conjunction with Land Court laws, that at the expiration of a specified time, of, say, two or three years, all Native lands shall bear taxation in the form of a land-tax, the same as is proposed for Europeans. This course will suggest to us the necessity of doing something to make our lands productive, and to adopt means towards their utilisation, so as to be in a position ready to meet the proposed coming taxation; and if the laws are equitably made we should be in a position to meet taxation, and if the laws are equitable and we do not take advantage of them the fault will be our own. I know that there is a growing intelligence among the Natives—that, with firmness, I believe the majority will rise equal to the occasion.

In the preceding remarks I have mentioned two or three years, because it will take a certain time to determine title; and I state positively we should not be taxed until that title is determined (which the Court should aim to do in as short a time as possible). In fact, we cannot be justly taxed otherwise, unless confiscation in all its enormity be resorted to.

As to the cost of title, the Natives should get their title at little or no cost. I justify this in the following manner: Natives in their normal state asked for no title beyond what they held under their own customs. They were content with it till the advent of the pakeha, who now requires the Maori to have a title like his own, there being no title otherwise; hence the creation of Land Courts. Therefore, as before intimated, there should be no drain on Native lands until title is completed, as it is only then that Natives can legally get revenue or benefit from their lands.

You will have seen in the preceding ideas on dealing with Native lands that there is only one great leading principle underlying the whole theory, and that is the question of State pre-emption. I have always consistently opposed pre-emption in its present form, and on every occasion the subject has been discussed among the Rohe Potae hapus I have brought the subject prominently before them, because pre-emption in its present form is unjust in the extreme. We are not assured the full value of our lands. It has the McKinlay air of Government self-protection about it; it is a monopoly. For in principle, as in actual practice, should Government offer us 5s. for land worth 7s. per acre? 5s. is the only price, and we have nothing but "Hobson's choice." But if we are assured full value by a system of alternative valuation, as I have suggested, then pre-emption concedes us the full advantages of free trade, while conserving the interests of the State, and at the same time holding in check the baneful tendencies towards the establishment of large landed proprietories—the curse of civilisation.

In conclusion, to summarise the vital bearings of the whole of the preceding ideas into one focus, one into the other, there is not a leading idea which can be omitted from the others; there is not a principle which can be differentiated from another without injuring the balance and without destroying the whole fabric.

I must crave your indulgence for having taxed your patience over this somewhat incoherent correspondence.

J. H. EDWARDS.

A few Words as to Native Schools and Endowments.

I THINK Natives should not be compelled to make endowments for primary Native schools unless they wish to do so voluntarily. There should, in my opinion, prevail one uniform system of school education, both for European and Maori, which is compulsory. European schools are maintained by the State, and Native schools should be assimilated. There is nothing sound in the argument that Native schools must be conducted differently to European schools. I utterly condemn the present system of distinct Native schools as useless, ineffective, and not warranting their great expense, with unsatisfactory results. In short, all Native schools should be the same as all the national primary schools, and under the Board of Education, to which one Native member may be elected where the district embraces a certain percentage of Native children. Discipline cannot be enforced in Native schools under the present system, and never can be until compulsory clauses are brought into operation.—J. H. E.

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