

You have asked for amendments, you desire that moneys received here as rental should be paid to you direct, instead of being sent to Wellington and paid to the Public Trustee. I will see what can be done in that respect, and if it cannot be done at less expense. The matter shall receive my serious consideration. There have been very great evils existing in the past, and I will tell you why. Moneys have been received by trustees for minors, and the trustees have never given the money to those whom it belonged to, and it is to prevent anything of that kind arising that the Public Trustee has been appointed to receive these moneys. If, therefore, we can arrange that the same security be given, so that the right persons shall get the money, and be put to less expense, the Government will try to bring that about. Now, as regards this site for a dam. The land has, I believe, passed away from the Government, and where the dam is now located is land belonging to the School Commissioners, and it has been given to them as an endowment, and I fear they will not be prepared to give it up unless they are compensated. When asking for the land, it is a great pity you did not ask to have the land put in the right position, when giving the boundaries you excluded the right to the dam. If, on inquiry, I find the position is different to what I have been informed, then I may be able to rectify matters, but at present I have been informed that where the dam now is is an endowment given to the School Commissioners, and the Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Auckland District is the authority for my making this statement. If it were still Crown land, there would not be much difficulty in dealing with it; but not being Crown land, the Government have no more control over it than the Natives. The question raised was that four acres were asked for originally, and only two acres were received. You now ask for the four acres, because it would give you this site for a dam. This is like locking the stable-door when the horse has gone—the land has gone from the Government. However, I will make inquiries into the matter, and ascertain how the mistake came to be made. The next question I come to is the landing-place. I was told that the Minister who was here some time ago promised that what you ask should be conceded. When Ministers make promises they should always keep them. I was asked to-day to give a written document, because it was inferred, I suppose, that, having got the promise of a previous Minister, and not knowing me, you wished to have a written document to insure the promise being carried out. I can give you better than a written document, because I can give you the information that what you wish has already been conceded, the place has been gazetted as a landing reserve. My colleague, Mr Cadman, who was the Native Minister before me, sent a direct communication here that this landing-place is absolutely gazetted. I will not give anything in writing, because if I were to do so it would be casting a doubt upon myself. It was a young man who asked me to give this in writing. If he had lived a few years ago, and had asked the *rangatira* of his tribe to give him anything in writing after his word had been passed, the *rangatira* would have considered himself insulted. I want the young representatives of the Native race to be in the same position as their forefathers. I want them to hold to the principle that when once their word is spoken it can be relied on, and I am sure that, if that is the case, they will beget the confidence of the pakehas, and, on the other hand, I wish the pakehas, when dealing with the Natives, to behave as gentlemen and honourable men, and keep their words. As regards not keeping to their word, I think the Natives have learnt that bad habit from the Europeans. I will look up the *Gazette*, and send you a copy of it, and if there is anything further required to complete the promise that was made you may rest assured it will be done. It is just as well that the landing reserve was marked, so that the Natives should know what land they owned, and avoid unpleasantness with the Europeans, thus placing them in an independent position. I am grieved to hear that your rights to the land have been disputed. I do not like to hear of your being treated with contempt by the Europeans. I do not think that is right. I know it is things of that kind which create bad feeling. Now, I will conclude by referring to the position as regards my work to-morrow. I was told that the key was here that would fit the lock of any door in New Zealand. What is the use of the key being here and in the lock when the Natives themselves will not turn it? I have told you to-day that the door is here, I told you the key is in the door, and it rests with yourselves whether you turn it and open the door to prosperity for yourselves and your children after you. All that is required of you in your own interests is to see that the land wanted for yourselves is reserved, that the balance of the land—the surplus land—is dealt with so that there may be an annual sum of money given to every one of the individual owners year by year. When the pakeha wants to make provision for himself in his old age, he purchases what is known as an annuity. You are now in a position, if you like, to insure that yourselves and your children after you receive a sum of money every year. When the pakeha wants to provide for his children after he is dead, he insures his life. Now, you are in a position, every one of you, to insure your lives both for yourselves and your wives and children after you—a sum of money every year so long as the grass grows and the water runs. What you are doing with the land to-day is of no value to you whatever—you get nothing from it, and yet that very thing can be converted into an annuity for yourselves and your children for all time. What I allude to is the disposal of surplus lands. When you sell, you can take one-half cash and one-half in debentures, or if you like you can, at your own option, put it all in debentures. Now, a debenture is a piece of paper with the stamp of the Government upon it—with the Queen's crown upon it—and the Queen undertakes every year, if the surplus land sold is worth, say, a hundred pounds, to pay five pounds. She would say to whoever got that piece of paper, "Here is five pounds for you." Now, that paper could not go to any one else but the one who got that piece of paper, and whose name was upon it. If trouble overtook you—even though you were compelled to go through the Bankruptcy Court—still that debenture and the interest payable thereon is not transferable, and cannot be attached for debt. It is only the property of the one who gives the land and has got the debenture. Now, if you do not want to sell the land, but prefer to lease it, the Government has taken power by the Act of last session to advance you 4 per cent. of the value of the land you offer to lease, so that you can have something to live upon. I have just put these things to you so that you will understand that I have not come here to-day promising, but to show what we have actually done for you.