

concerned—in fact it would be the mouthpiece of Tuhoe. He is the connecting link between the two. I have on my journey seen every tribe. At Ruatoki, Galatea, Te Whaiti, Te Mimi, and Ruatahuna, and the same welcome, the same kindness has been accorded and shown to the party and myself on every occasion. As we have journeyed on our way every assistance has been rendered to us, and that assistance we wanted, for it is a perilous journey, and it was over one of the roughest countries I have ever had the experience of travelling through. After travelling yesterday from Te Mimi to the lake, I assure you we all slept soundly last night we were very tired indeed. Well, our guide and friend, Tupaea, brought us safe to the lake, but it rested with our gallant captain and the crew of the canoe to bring us across the dividing boundary and bring us safe to you this evening. Your lake is well named Waikare Moana. They are very troubled waters, and I think every one of our party will vouch and take my word for it that the waters of the lake to-day were very wet. It was rather suggestive to me when I found my old friends Biddle and Collier here, who are travelling with us, taking off their boots. I said to myself it is a case of swim, but I thought the best thing to do was to keep my boots on and rely on the captain and crew. I watched very carefully what the captain was doing, and I knew full well he knew the danger, and that we were in safe hands. Hence I was satisfied we should reach the shore safely and well. We had very little food on the other side, there were no pigeons to be had, and it became a question as to which of two evils to face—the water or starvation—so we trusted to the canoe, and the captain and the crew who were with it. I must not forget to mention the young man who came from Te Mimi, who assisted the men in the canoe, and who came ahead to let you know of our arrival. Therefore, we may, I trust, presume that the perils of the journey are now at an end. There was great responsibility on the captain and crew of that canoe to-day, because there would have been a change of Government if we had not arrived safe on the shores of the lake. As it is, I believe I can say, without being at all egotistical, I am the first Prime Minister to travel that perilous journey and it is not saying too much when I say I think I shall be the last for a good many years to come. You have asked the question,—and you are quite right in so doing,—now that I have passed all these perils and am safe here, what have I come for? You have said, “If you come for our good, welcome, if you come for our evil, welcome, we are glad to see you.” Well, I will tell you honestly as one man speaking to another, colour makes no distinction. We all belong to the Great Master who looks down upon us and loves us all, and I say I came here for your good, and not for evil. I would not have come this distance to do you evil. Just ask yourselves the question—you have done me no harm, you have not injured the Government you have done no harm to any one why then should I desire to come here and meet you to do you an injury? You have said that you are troubled, that you are a people living here isolated that you do not know what is going on around you and that you are ignorant of what is going on in other parts of the colony and when you speak these words to me, you speak the truth. I feel that to be the case. You are isolated you are living, as you say, not knowing the Government, or the reason for your isolated condition. You say, “Let us know the law, let us know what is going on, what is for our good.” That is why I am here. I am here to let you know what is for your good. You have said to-night that you have been informed that I have been going round to see the Natives in order to get them to sell their surplus land to the Government. That statement is incorrect. You have told me that you have no surplus land, and that what land you have you are occupying and using. If you are doing so, that is all the Government desire. In doing that, you are doing good to yourselves and the colony. That is what the pakehas are doing, from one end of the colony to the other and I speak for both races when I say that is what the pakehas desire, and they have said so by passing laws to that effect. The land is there so that it may produce and the people may live—no matter to what race or colour they belong. There is sufficient land in New Zealand for both races, and it is my desire and the desire of the Government that both races may live in love and friendship side by side. It is to promote that object, and with a view of seeing that the evils of the old times—disturbances with the pakehas—are not repeated to see that there is an end to this for all time, to know what your feelings and desires are, and to see how best to assist you and promote friendship between both races, that I have undertaken this journey. I shall, therefore, ask you to be true to yourselves, speak your minds, and speak openly. You have said to-night that I am your parent and the head of the Government. Well, I ask you as a parent, and as head of the Government, to speak your minds openly to me, that I may know your troubles, if you have any, so that I may be able to help you. If you have no troubles you will not need my help. The result of my experience on this journey is that I find on one side the Native race think they are labouring under a grievance because the pakehas have not paid them that attention which their case demanded, and on the other hand the pakehas say that the Natives are not taking up a position of progress. Between the two there has been a misunderstanding, and you have been misjudged. I can speak from personal experience, and will be able, with the assistance of my colleagues, to remove the doubts that have been on your minds. I have considered your position. You could not and have not been able to go down to Wellington and see me or the Government and explain for yourselves the position in which you are placed. Those who have represented you have done their best. I will not say too much, because I do not desire to flatter, but will say of my colleague, Mr Carroll, that when he represented the Native race he did his best to bring about friendship and peace between the two races. You have mentioned to-night that his position has changed, that he was formerly the representative of the Native race and now represents a European constituency, and that he is now a Minister in the Cabinet, representing the Native race. I think this will convince you that he possesses the confidence of the Native race, because they returned him to represent them twice, and that he possesses the confidence of the pakehas is conclusive, because they have now returned him to represent them. His position, therefore, is more powerful for your good to-day than ever it was before. I have told you that the Government