

his friends will be making a road for nothing, but you and your friends will be making roads and will be paid for it.

Hori Kukutai: Yes, ours will be a special contract.

WHANGAREI.

We left Auckland on the night of the 14th March in the steamer "Wellington" for Whangarei, and arrived there next morning.

Descriptive.—Whangarei Heads. Remarkables. Puriri-trees. Hedges of orange-trees. Mr Dobie's orchard. Met by Mr R. Thompson, M.H.R., and leading settlers. Left to hold Native meeting at Poroti. Accompanied by Mr R. Thompson. Description of road and Whangarei Falls (see *Star's* report). Premier meets gumdigger, determines to see mode of working. Takes spade and spear from digger, and works hard for a quarter of an hour. Digger says, "Not first time you have handled spade, I can see."

MEETING AT POROTI. (Uriroi Tribe.)

After lunch the party adjourned to a large meeting-house.

The Premier opened the meeting in a short address. He said,—I received an intimation that the Natives desired to see me here at this place. I promised to come, and am now here prepared to listen to them, and to hear from them direct concerning any matter that affects their interests. Men of the Native race, I ask you to open your minds freely and speak to me as a friend. If you do not do so and there is any misunderstanding, the blame must attach to you and not to the Government. You have an opportunity to-day that you may not have again, and you had better make the best of it. I am a good listener, and will now sit down and listen.

Matiu Komene said,—The reason we wished you to come here and meet us is on account of the Government Bill which I hold in my hand, and which the people of this place will never agree to or indorse. That is the big subject with which your visit here is associated—that you yourself may hear direct from us and other Natives that we are not in agreement with this Government Bill. That is all, so far as I am concerned.

The Premier What part of the Bill do you disagree with? What Bill is it, and what part do you disagree with?

Matiu Komene The Land Acquisition Bill. I disagree with the whole of it, there is not a single part of it that finds favour with the people of this place.

Hira te Taka I sent a letter to you inviting you to come here, that you might listen to the important matter which interests us and which has just been given expression to by the last speaker—the Bill of the Government.

The Premier Have you any more subjects to bring forward, so that I can reply to each of them?

Hoera Rewi I welcome you, the Minister, in accordance with custom, and I thank you for coming to see us in response to our invitation. It is true that one of the principal subjects about which we wish to confer with you is the one already mentioned. In taking the stand we do, we do not wish in any way to take up a domineering position. This Bill is a little of a surprise to us. It came upon us as such, and the Native people in this part of the Island were not aware that it would be passed into law. Perhaps, if intimation had been given to them beforehand that legislation of that character was to be passed into law, they would have had time to adapt themselves to its provisions. We are pleased, however at this opportunity being given to us of having a *korero* with you and your colleague. It is only recently that we have seen a copy of the Act. That is all I have to say in reference to that. I wish now to speak to you about certain proposed roads in this district. I would inform you that the road that goes over this land was one which had been given to the Government by the old people, and at the present time we consider that that handing-over still holds good, and that the road is still under the Government authority. We did not sell the right to the road, neither did we receive compensation for it, it was given free to the Government. I mention this to you, the Premier and Minister, that the said agreement in reference to this road will not be departed from by us. I will now go on to another matter, and, as the member for the district, Mr Thompson, is here, he can also listen to the request. It is, that the Native Land Court which is to investigate this block should be ordered to sit here at Poroti. That is our wish. The survey is near completion. There are several people in this district spread over the country, and this is the most convenient place for them to assemble. They could not very well go down to the towns, as they would have a difficulty in finding beds and food for themselves and generally they would be at great discomfort. There is yet another matter. The people in this locality wish Pomare Kingi, one of our chiefs, who is confined in the lunatic asylum, to be set free. They think they have complied sufficiently with the law by handing him over, and putting him in the charge under which he now is. He does not seem to get any better, and all his relatives are anxious that he should be brought back amongst them, and they would devise some means of taking care of him. All the people are in grief about him because he is so far removed. They wish to see him occasionally. It is a prayer from this people that Pomare Kingi be set free, and returned to them. That is all I have to say.

Herera Ponamo I heartily support the last speaker. We do not understand the Bill referred to—we are ignorant of its provisions. I likewise support the application made by the last speaker in reference to the Court sitting at Poroti. We cannot go to the towns, we have no one to keep us while we are there. Long live the Minister!

Matene Ripa I stand up to thank the Premier for coming here, and to thank his Ministry. We are in the dark about this Bill. The reason we wanted you here was that you might explain this Bill to us. Some of the people supposed that if they got the Minister here they would get him to reconsider the matter.