

HENI TE REI examined.

102. *The Chairman.*] The Committee would like to hear what you have to say on this question?—I shall speak about a certain clause in the petition by which we claim that this land is the *waiu*, or “mother’s milk,” handed down by our ancestors from generation to generation. Now, the expression “mother’s milk” refers directly to the income derived from the island in the form of rent-moneys; and also to the birds which the island produces, and the fish which may be taken off the coast. When I leased this land, I reserved out of the lease about half an acre, so that at any time we wished to go over we could occupy this piece of reserve, and fish, or do whatever else we desired. And I may say that, when I discovered the Bill that has been proposed by the Government to deal with the island in this way, I have been weeping ever since; and I feel that I cannot, under any consideration, agree to such a proposal. I cannot agree to the island passing over to the hands of the Government and away from us, because it has been a valued possession handed down to us from generation to generation, and that we hold in remembrance of our ancestors. And, no matter how you propose to take it, I will never, under any consideration, agree to it. I put it to the Government in this way: that I am absolutely without another acre of land in the world except what I hold in that island; and are they going to take that from me? I am the mother of many children, and the grandmother of many grandchildren. That is all.

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