

with the approval of the House, or what might be thought would not operate for the benefit of the Maori people. Then, of course, it would be quite right and proper that such portions of the Bill should be expunged, and something better—something more to the advantage of the people—inserted in the Bill. My principal desire is to see this matter settled this present session of Parliament, so that we may as speedily as possible get rid of all the burden of trouble, pain, and injustice that at the present time oppresses the Maori people. I have no doubt that if this Maori Council be granted during this session of Parliament this Committee will find as a direct result of the granting of the Runanga Council that very few matters will be referred to it for consideration. I anticipate that if a Maori Council is constituted there will be very few matters which it will not be competent for that Council to deal with. I should say that only criminal actions such as murders, for example, or matters of serious crime, should not be dealt with by the Council, but all matters referring to land, and any ordinary matters that might crop up, the Council would be quite competent to deal with.

8. And do away with the petitions?—Well, it would not do away with them altogether, but would reduce the number very considerably. Of course, it will make the work of this Committee very much lighter, because it will have removed the cause that renders the petitions necessary. Of course, with regard to sales of land, I only say this: put a stop to them entirely—that is, the Crown land purchases. But if the Maori Council was satisfied itself as to the proper value which they may receive for a block of land which they propose to sell, why should they not have the same right to sell that land as any one else, if they consider it is for the benefit of the owners. I think I have placed the matter sufficiently plainly before the Committee now. When we come to deal with the Bill, and go into its various provisions, then the matter will be thoroughly explained and put before the Committee. I say what I propose should be done is this: let the Government formulate what they propose should be done, and then let each Maori member express the views and wishes of that particular district which he represents with regard to the matter—I mean when discussing the various clauses and sections of this Bill, and their relation to and the manner in which they would affect the various districts represented by the respective Maori members. I think that if we—the Maori members—have decided upon the course that should be taken and are borne out by our constituents—the people whom we represent here—all that remains for the House to do is to give effect to our desire; and if the members of this House cannot see their way to agree to certain provisions that may be contained within the Bill, then it will be time to discuss and explain and perhaps vary and alter the provisions taken exception to. I think that is all I have to say.

9. *Captain Russell.*] Mr. Kaihau said that he thought that the surveys ought to rest with the Maori Council and they would deal with them and do away with the difficulty of surveys. What does he mean by that?—Well, what I mean is this: that there are certain Maori lands which the Maori owners are not willing should be surveyed—which they wish to keep to be their own absolute property. The only survey they want is the survey of the outside boundary of their land, and if the Maori Council have decided upon the outside boundary of such land and have that boundary surveyed no trouble can affect that land. If that was the case no surveyor would be authorised to enter upon Native lands and make a survey unless that survey had been first sanctioned by the Maori Council. But under the laws—with regard to surveying—as they now exist, even though the owners of the land are entirely opposed to a survey being made, the Native Minister authorises a surveyor to enter upon a block of Maori land on the application of, perhaps, only one of the Native owners of that land. Supposing there are one or two hundred owners of the block and one man out of that two hundred owners applies for a survey to be made—we will suppose that the Government has purchased that man's interest—then they authorise a survey to be made, and the other owners of the land, who are not willing such a survey should be made, are called upon to suffer injustice. Then that block is called upon to pay the cost of such survey, together with the interest accruing thereon from year to year—and this keeps on mounting up—they are not allowed to sell or lease their lands in the meantime, and the lands are saddled with this burden of survey-money and interest accruing therefrom. The people have to suffer that injury; and if called upon to pay this survey charge they are not allowed to sell their lands for the prices they would like to get for them. They are not allowed to lease it. They have no other means of raising money, and the result is the land is sometimes put up to auction and sold to defray the cost of the surveys. Now, I say the whole of that would be done away with once and for all if power was given to the Maori Council to deal with the question of surveys.

10. Then, he means to prevent surveys, not to control them. I thought he probably had not realised that the whole of the surveys have to be tied in one with the other; he only wants to prevent the surveyor going there, not to have any actual control of the survey itself?—Yes; no survey should be made of Native land which has not first been authorised by the Maori Council, because Maoris, no doubt, as time passes by, will perhaps find out how to survey themselves. All I want is to have the power given to the Maori Council. I have no doubt if they realise that it is for their benefit the land should be surveyed they will agree to it—if they find it will prejudicially affect them they will have the right to stop it. Then, that would remove one of the causes of grievances and trouble at once—a frequent cause of trouble between the two races inhabiting this country.

11. He wants the Maori Council to have power to set aside land and make subdivisions. Does he not realise there must then be some registration of these lands, and that that must be done in connection with all the reserves of the country—a final registration by some Court?—Yes; it would be quite competent for the Maori Council to keep a register-book of their own. It would be a record of their part of the transaction and would be equivalent to the records kept by the Europeans on their side.

12. But he wants it an entirely separate record?—Yes; let the Maori Council keep its