

the different Maori members do not coincide, then leave it for us the European members of this Committee to ask what questions may seem necessary with a view to clearing up or reconciling the contesting views. I would like, for example, to ask Mr. Heke just one or two questions.

*The Chairman:* Very well, Mr. Carroll.

1. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.* First of all, I would like to ask him whether he is absolutely definite in saying that there should be no more Native land purchased?—What I say is this: What I most desire is the removal of the restriction with regard to the sale of Native lands absolutely, and that Maoris should be allowed to deal with their lands as they think fit. I realise that this is extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible, of accomplishment; therefore I must take the smaller advantages, and agree to there being no more purchasing of Native lands.

2. Then, I understand you to say that you are now prepared to support a measure which will prohibit any further Native land purchase, either by the Crown or by any private purchaser?—There are two lines of views which I am prepared to accept, the first of which, the one which I personally prefer, is that the restrictions should be taken off and Maoris allowed to deal with their lands as they think fit. Now that I see it is not likely I can obtain that, I advance the other view, and say, stop Crown purchases. That is the absolute and definite stand which I now take.

3. Well, now, as you have expressed yourself as being in support of a measure which will stop sales either to the Crown or private purchasers of any Maori land, are you prepared to make any exemptions in the case of Maoris, for instance, who consider it advisable to individualise or deal with their lands in any particular way?—Yes; I think that would be a concession to meet the first line I took up, but for the present I am prepared to stand by what I have already said.

4. Then, I understand you to mean this: that when you say prohibit the sale of Native land you mean prohibit the sale of Native land such as this: land the title to which is uninvestigated or land the title to which has been ascertained, and awarded to a large number of owners, whether under a certificate of title or other instrument?—When I say that I am prepared to support a measure to prohibit any further purchase of Native lands either by the Crown or by private purchasers I mean that I am prepared to support such a law with regard to all such descriptions of Native lands as is contemplated in the Bill which the Government intend to bring down with a view of meeting the case.

5. But, as I understand by what you now say, you would leave a way open whereby the partitions may be effected? Supposing, for instance, there was a block of land held by a few owners only and it is recognised that they could manage their own land to better advantage than the Board could do on their behalf, and if such owners of such land prefer that they should be allowed to personally administer their own land irrespective of Boards, should they be permitted to exercise that privilege? Would it be advisable?—Yes, that is my view of the case; but, then, I do not go so far as to say that the Board in the first place shall have the right to control that land and that the Maoris should have to first ask the Board's permission before they could utilise or work the land themselves outside of the Board's control.

6. Very well. You say that the purchase of Maori land, either by the Crown or private purchasers, is to be stopped. Now, if that is done, what do you say to the proposal that a Board or a Maori Council or some such body as that should be constituted to deal with these lands?—Well, I agree, because the present wish and desire appears to be that a Board or some such tribunal should be constituted. But I think that the only question upon which it is possible I may not agree either with yourself or some other of my fellow-members of this Committee is the question of jurisdiction and authority to be given to that Board.

7. Well, now, irrespective of the powers and authority that may be vested in that Board, leaving that aside for the present, supposing that a Board is constituted to manage and administer Maori lands, would you be willing that all Native lands should be compulsorily placed under the control of that Board, or would you rather advocate that it should be for the Native owners of each separate block of land to first of all submit their lands to the Board before the Board could have any control over them?—I say that it should be optional with the Native owners of the land whether or not they considered it advisable to place their lands under the control and management of the Board. It should not be made an arbitrary matter.

8. Very well, then, we will say, for the purpose of argument, that the matter is to be as you advocate that it is to be optional with the owners of the land whether or not they submit their lands to the control of the Board; then, in the event of certain owners of certain land declining to come under the powers which control the management of the Board, what condition, or what law, or what state of things, would apply to them—to their lands?—Supposing a Bill has been passed. I say that there should be no compulsion; it should be optional for the Native owners to decide whether they would bring their land under the operation of the Board, and I say that the position of Native landowners who do not wish to bring their lands under the control of the Board would be that their lands would still be under the control of the general provisions of the Act. Supposing this Native Land Bill had become law, the land would be under the control of that Act, even though they did not bring their lands under the operation of the Board; the only thing would be that they, under that Act, do not avail themselves of that provision which renders it competent for them to place their lands under the Board if they so wish. It is possible that certain owners of land may say, "Oh, no, we want to cultivate our own land, then why should we place it under the management of the Board?" Then, there may be other Native owners who say, "We do not want this Bill at all; let our lands remain under the Acts that now obtain, and we do not want to have anything to do with the new Native Act."

*Mr. Kaihau:* Now, I think, Mr. Chairman, that we are not doing what we came here to do. We did not come here to talk about either the Government Board Bill or to talk about my Bill, but we came here to discuss matters with a view to deciding upon other and better land-laws—to