

*Mr. Rich* answered, *Patetere*. The Government had seen fit to issue a Proclamation which it was generally understood included the whole of this land. It included, no doubt, the greater portion of it. All this land ever since had been at a standstill, and the capital had been locked up. It was a great injustice to the negotiators, and was very objectionable to the Natives. That was the history of the matter up to the present time. There was a block of land of 20,000 acres, which had been surveyed, and a large sum of money paid upon it, that was generally supposed to be under Proclamation. He had had an interview with *Mr. James Mackay* on Saturday last, and *Mr. Mackay* had given him a memorandum for the Under-Secretary, which memorandum stated that this land was excluded from the Proclamation. The Natives had a very strong feeling about the matter, and the parties who had advanced the moneys and negotiated for the land felt very much aggrieved about it. The Natives were anxious that a general meeting should be called; that the Government should be represented at that meeting; and that then they could deal with the whole matter. He had gone into the affair with clean hands and in perfect good faith.

*Hon. Native Minister* asked what the deputation proposed the Government should do.

*Mr. Rich* thought the Government should be represented at the meeting to be held by the Natives, and that the whole matter should be discussed.

*Hon. Native Minister* said that, before the matter could be determined, the title to the block would have to be ascertained; the various interests of the different Maoris would have to be ascertained and determined by a Court before a final settlement could be arrived at.

*Mr. Rich* said, what the deputation thought desirable was, that, as the Natives proposed to have a meeting, if the meeting was held, the Native Land Court should sit at the same time. It would simplify matters. They considered that they had a prior claim, and were entitled to some consideration from the Government on account of the manner in which they had been treated in regard to the matter. In fact, they felt sure the Government would do everything they could to have the matter settled between the Government, themselves, and the Natives.

*Hon. Native Minister* inquired how the deputation wished the Government to evince that treatment to them.

*Mr. Walker* said that *Patetere* was a large district, on which the Government had made advances. The Natives said that the Government had not made advances on land in which they (the deputation) were interested. It remained to be seen, however, whether the Government had or had not done so. They wished to assist the Government, and also that the Government and themselves should work amicably together; and the land could thus be got at a much lower price.

*Mr. Graham* said, as far as he could gather, the Natives wished their intertribal matters to be settled by a Commissioner appointed by the Government. The payments on account of the land by the Government and private individuals were conflicting. The Natives wished to have the matter discussed, so that they could ascertain on which land the Government had paid money, and on which private persons had advanced money. Intertribal disputes could be settled at this meeting which it was proposed to hold—disputes which could not be brought before the Court.

*Hon. Native Minister* said that they must observe that the survey would have to be sufficiently forward to allow the Court to sit. He believed the surveys were not sufficiently forward to allow of the land being brought before the Court. He did not think the matter could be amicably settled until the surveys were sufficiently forward to satisfy the Court.

*Major Wilson* said the Government had paid some £4,000 upon 80,000 or 90,000 acres of land of the blocks of which *Messrs. Rich* and *Walker* had spoken. That land was partly surveyed, but not altogether. The land that had been negotiated for by persons outside did not interfere at all with that 80,000 acres.

*Hon. Native Minister* said that it was a question the Court would have to determine, whether the Government had any interests in those blocks or not. He would not be prepared to admit that they had not. He was informed, on the contrary, that payments had been made to the Natives by the Government. It had been suggested by *Mr. Graham* that an officer of the Government should be appointed to settle intertribal matters outside of the Court. Would the Maoris accept the decisions thus given outside of the Court?

*Mr. Graham* said that, as a matter of fact, the cases which had been most successfully settled were those in which even the Judge himself had gone on to the ground with the contesting parties, and heard them all speak there. Whatever Commissioner the Government appointed, the Natives would listen to him, and he could arrange these disputes and adjust the survey, so that the matter could be brought before the Court. It would be a good thing to have the Court sitting on the ground. The *Hauhau* section of the Natives had agreed not to interfere in the matter with the friendlies on this side of the *Waikato*. It was a thing to be feared, if the *Hauhau* section should go back on their promise, and so close up the lands. The Natives wished to know who had taken money either from private individuals or from the Government. *Mr. Williams* had informed him that the survey of a number of blocks was sufficiently advanced to enable the blocks to be brought before the Court.

*Hon. Native Minister* said that he had been informed that there were sixteen blocks which were actually sufficiently surveyed to pass the Court. There was a little gap to finish on the western boundary. He thought that, until that survey was sufficiently advanced to pass the Court, their interests could not be determined in the block. With respect to the Commissioner whom they said might be sent up to assist the Maoris in ascertaining the tribal boundaries, he fancied, as far as he understood, that *Mr. L. M. Grace* was occupying that position at the present moment. *Mr. Grace* had been with the survey-party for a considerable part of his time. He had, he understood, been endeavouring to smooth matters over in this way between the conflicting parties.

*Major Wilson* said, if the Natives were going to have a meeting, *Mr. L. M. Grace* could attend on behalf of the Government.

*Mr. Walker* said the Natives wished to have a person to act as arbitrator between the parties.

*Mr. Graham* said the Natives wished an impartial judge to be appointed to inquire into the payment of moneys on the lands. He apprehended that *Mr. Grace* was a qualified officer to appear