

me by you. That is why I think I am right in asking you now to take me out of the swamp at Orakau, and to put me on to the dry land.

*Tu Takangahau*, of Uriwera, seconded the request of the previous speaker, that some dry land might be given them, instead of the swamp at Orakau.

*Te Puri* and *Horopapera*, after greeting the Minister, also requested that dry land might be given to them at Orakau.

*Wineti Hipirimi* said that he was a lame person, and could not be expected to swim to his land, and preferred the same request as the preceding speakers.

*Timoti* and *Matui*, both of Ngatiporou, made the same request.

*Te Rangihiroa* said: I refer now to a remark that you made, that the Government have no wish to interfere with the Maori religion. During the time that I was travelling, in accordance with the Amnesty Act, instituted by Mr. Bryce, I went over to Heretaunga, and I went to Wairoa, which is in the district of Hawke's Bay. There were 220 of my party. We found that some of the people of the place had built a pa to fight me—to oppose me—but I paid no attention to that pa, because I knew that I was going in accordance with the law, and the law is supposed to be as a parent over all people. The people of Te Wairoa presented guns at us with the intention of shooting us. This is a question of mine to the Native Minister with regard to people who are travelling about in accordance with law and in accordance with religion that is in existence in the Islands, and to the statement of the Government that Te Kooti should not be allowed to travel all over the country. Te Kooti agreed to the request and he would not go to Te Wairoa. I wish you to understand that I intend to go to Wairoa in the coming January. I shall go in accordance with the law. The only canoe that I shall make use of to convey me to Wairoa will be the law. The paddlers of that canoe are affection, the making of one, and religion. I wish the Native Minister to make it known within the Hawke's Bay District, in order that the people of that district may not cause trouble when I go there.

*Te Rito o te Rangī* (alias Te Rapatu), of Ngatikahunu, said: Greeting to you, the person who has been appointed to office during a season of peace. I will tell you what my desires are. My desire during the year that has just passed was that Te Kooti should pay a visit to the East Coast and to Te Wairoa. In consequence of the views of some of the chiefs who sent petitions to the Government he was not allowed to go there. I myself sent a letter to you during the month of November last. I said to you in my letter, "Allow Te Kooti to go to Te Wairoa." But, in accordance with the way in which you looked upon those letters which have been sent to you by those who bore ill-will to him, he was restrained from going there; but now that I have seen you and you have seen me, and as you are the Native Minister, I say this word to you: I wish you to consider the matter and to allow him to go during this year. I think that you—the Government—should be his assistant and protect him, and see that no harm comes to him. If you, or somebody representing the law, accompanied him, none of the people who have ill-feeling against him would have power to molest him. There are chiefs at Heretaunga and Te Wairoa who have different feelings regarding this matter, but they would have no effect if you would allow somebody connected with the law to accompany him. The reason they would have no power would be because the supreme power rests with the Government. Their power would be subservient to the Government.

*Mr. Ballance*: I have heard what you have all said with regard to the land at Orakau. You have asked that you should not be put on the water. I have made inquiries about this matter and ascertained that the land is not fit for settlement, in consequence of its being liable to be flooded. I hear that there is but a very small portion of it dry land, and that nearly the whole of it is flooded at a particular time of the year. I think there must have been some mistake in giving you this land: it could not have been the intention of the Government to give you land which was generally covered with water to reside upon. I think, therefore, the request that you have made is a reasonable one. I will make further inquiry into the matter, and see and get sufficient dry land for you to reside upon. I have not inquired into the particular block that you have asked for—that is, where the blockhouse stands. I do not know whether the Government have it at their disposal to give to you; but I will see that you get land either there or somewhere else. I shall make inquiry into this matter, and be able, perhaps, to inform you before I leave Kihikihi as to the land which may be available. I hope you are all satisfied with regard to that. I will now pass on to the other subject which has been referred to—the letter which I sent asking Te Kooti not to go to the East Coast. *Tu Takangahau* said, quoting my own words, that the Government have no wish to interfere with the Maori religion. If you will read that letter again you will see that it did not prohibit Te Kooti and his people from visiting the East Coast. That letter simply contained advice that it would be better for yourselves in the existing state of feeling not to visit the East Coast at the present time. The Government had no objection, and have none now, to your visiting the East Coast. It has been rightly said that it is the duty of the Government to protect all who are acting in accordance with the law. That is perfectly true, but the Government have not got it in their power to prevent a bad man taking a gun and shooting some of you. It was in order to prevent harm from coming to yourselves that I wrote that letter asking that you should not go at the present time. There is a sore and bitter feeling amongst some of the people on the East Coast, who do not forget the past; and I thought it better that you should remain here for some time until that bitter feeling had passed away. Time heals all wounds, and in a few years it is probable that the people of Te Wairoa, who fortified their pa and took guns and threatened you, will have forgotten all that took place a few years ago. You have said that it is the duty of the Government to protect you, and I admit that it is the duty of the Government to protect you; therefore as far as the Government can protect you it will do so in the exercise of your religion and the exercise of your liberty. Only the Government may still advise you in these matters. If they find that harm is likely to ensue from this visit the Government will tell you of it, but they will not interfere with the exercise of your liberty. It will be a matter left entirely with yourselves. Now, with regard to the Government action: the Government will advise these people at Wairoa not to interfere with you.