

and, if a suitable line were found, he was to return and let me know. There were five of the Ngatimaniopoto present when this contract was made, but they are not here now. I spoke to the five who were there, and I said, "How shall we do in the absence of the majority of the people?" They said, "It cannot be helped, we must act for them as they are not here." They said, "We will agree to what Mr. Bryce asks." It was then agreed, on the understanding that it was only to be an investigation to find out the best route for the railway, and after it was found they were to return and let the Maoris know before doing anything else. I then said to Mr. Bryce, "What you wish for has been agreed to; now I want you to agree to my request." Mr. Bryce asked me, "What do you want?" I then said, "I am going to send a petition to the House, and I want you and your Cabinet to back it up." I went on with the petition at once, but you know yourselves what it is. We were not consulted with regard to the erection of trig. stations; the consequence of this was that the Maoris got unsettled seeing what was being done, as one brother could not advise the other or tell the other anything about it, and I was sent to Wellington by the people. When I got to Wellington I spoke to Mr. Ballance, and he will remember what I said to him: (1.) With regard to the external boundary-line; (2.) To leave us to sanction the making of the railway-line; (3.) That the gold should not be worked by Europeans without our authority; (4.) With regard to giving power to the Maori Committees to conduct matters for the Maori people; (5.) That no liquor licenses should be granted within certain boundaries; (6.) That the Native Land Court should not try any of our lands without our first sanctioning it, and that the Europeans should refrain from interfering with the Maori lands, but leave the Natives to manage them themselves. I spoke to Mr. Ballance at Wellington about all these matters. I am mentioning these matters that you—Mr. Wilkinson—and your people, the Ngatimaniopoto, may hear. I referred to all these matters in my speech to the House, and I now say to you, the people who are here, that whatever you have to say to Mr. Ballance, be clear. If you are satisfied to allow the railway to go on, say so; if not, be clear to say so; lay your matters fully before the Minister. The reason I went to Wellington was that I might lay these matters before both Houses. I will now leave the matter for Mr. Wilkinson and his people to talk to Mr. Ballance about.

*John Ormsby*: I stand up, in accordance with what Mr. Ballance said this morning, that nobody should keep back anything, but speak out openly his thoughts. I say that that was a very good remark that fell from Mr. Ballance, therefore I stand up to say what the Maori feelings are in connection with the matter, what they have been and are, to give the reasons why the European race and the Maori race have been estranged. The causes that estranged us are still in existence, although they are all working together. Nothing has ever been done or said yet to enable us to do away with this estrangement. The only thing that has been done, so far as I know, was the petition that was sent to Parliament. In that petition was set forth everything that the Maoris were afraid of would do them harm, and also what they desired should be done to benefit them. In order to make what I am stating clear I will go back to the commencement. There are two principal things about which the Maoris are very fearful: One is anything that pertains to our land, which refers indirectly to the Native Land Court, and to roads. Possibly Mr. Ballance will say, "Why is it you fear these two things?" Now, the reasons are these: We have never seen any good yet come out of the work of the Native Land Court. Where now are the numerous blocks of land which have been passed through the Native Land Court? They are not in the possession of the Maoris, but they are in the possession of Europeans; therefore I say there can be no good result to us from the action of the Native Land Court. Now, with regard to the roads. It has been stated that, as soon as ever a road is formed, then a Road Board is also formed—that is, the Rating Act is enforced. The Act gives the Government power to proclaim within the Rating Act any land, although it may not have passed through the Native Land Court; and our lands, although we might not have used them for twenty years, still the rates would go on accumulating, and, whenever we use them, the accumulation of rates would be demanded from us. Possibly you will reply, and say, "That is your fault, because you do not put your lands quickly through the Court." Then I shall say, "Through which Court are we to pass them?" Because, as I have shown, we are fearful of the action of the Native Land Court, because of the evil acts by which the Native Land Court is worked. Those are the reasons that we have dreaded up to the present time. We thought at the time that we sent our petition that we would explain to the Government what we wanted—that some Acts would be passed that would be beneficial to the Native race. We wished that we should be allowed ourselves to manage matters concerning our own lands. The reason why we wish to manage our lands ourselves is because we, being the owners of land, know all about it, and are the proper persons to manage it. In accordance with the present procedure of the Native Land Court, anybody can go in and lay a claim to a block of land whether he has a right to it or not; and, should he be strong, and press his fictitious claim, the Court will give judgment in his favour. Another fault that I have to find in connection with the Native Land Court is that there are others backing up those that appear before the Court. Those are the Government and the companies. They back up people who put claims in to the Court. The reason why I associated the Government with companies is because the Government is a purchaser of land the same as the companies are. One says, "I am the proper person to buy;" another says, "I am the proper person to buy." The fact of them having paid money to Natives on account of land strengthens the claim of those people when they are in Court, and I have found out that a Court is merely a machine by which the lands are transferred by the Native owners to either the companies or the Government. I will not say that these Acts were made with the intention of bringing about evil, but I believe they are made thinking that they would produce good; but when they were worked it was found that they produced evil; and I therefore consider that this, the 4th day of February, 1885, should be the commencement of an era in which we would start a new policy in connection with these matters, and that it should be done in accordance with Mr. Ballance's remark that we should lay our matters fearlessly before him, and hide nothing. There were two things granted to us out of the petition: One was to keep in future the companies from dealing with our lands; the other was to