

give the Native Committees power. But, with regard to the forming of the Native Committees, that was not carried to such an extent as we wished. It was only a shadow when we came to take hold of it to work it—it was not substantial. I now ask that the Committees shall have some power given to enable them to force disputants to bring their cases before the Committee, and that the Committee should be placed in the position of the Native Land Court. What the Europeans desire is that the land should be granted individually, but I consider that it would not be proper to individualize the titles; that they should be given in favour of hapus, because from the time that our ancestors first settled on this land it was always divided amongst hapus; nothing was known about individualizing titles; then each hapu can appoint its own Committee, and then the Committee representing each hapu could manage or decide whether their land should be rented or sold. I will now refer to what I said with regard to the Government purchasing Native land. I will now refer to what I said with regard to the Government purchasing Native land. It has been said that the Government is the proper person to purchase Native lands, but I say “No.” There are no persons who have more right to dispose of Native land than the owners of that land; and I say that if the Government have the selling or the purchasing of Native lands it shuts the Natives out of the market; and we wish the Government at the present time, during the time that we are ignorant as to what should be done, to look after our lands for us—that is, that no person should be allowed to come in and interfere with our management of them. I consider that if the Government were to act in this way there would be no further trouble. There would be no road opened by which a single person from a hapu could go to the Government, and say, “Give me a couple of pounds on account.” Everything that that hapu wanted to do would be done through their Committee or Board. I will now refer to the Maori members in the House of Parliament. We claim that four members are two small a number for us in the House. When we compare that there are only four Maori members and ninety European members, that four is too little. The election of Maori members should be regulated in the same way as that of European members—that is, according to population. According to your way of doing it, about every five thousand people are represented by a member. The Maori race numbers some forty thousand. According to the European basis of population there is a member for every five thousand, including women and children; but, when we come to appoint the Maori members, you only allow a Native member for every ten thousand. I say that there should be eight Native members, to put us on an equal footing with the Europeans. Perhaps you will say that some of the Maoris vote for European members, but the Maoris should be restricted to vote for the Maori members only. That is one of the matters that I am very anxious that Mr. Ballance should consider. Another matter is the passing of the laws. Previously it has been the custom for the Acts to be made by the Europeans only, and the Maoris have no voice in the matter; although the Maori members may be in the House at the time that the Acts are passed they have no knowledge of them—they have no voice, no power. I consider that, in the formation of Acts that refer to the Native race, the Natives should be consulted. When it is proposed to pass an Act that affects the Native race copies of the proposed Bill should be circulated amongst the Natives beforehand, so that they may have something to say about them, or it might be left to the Natives themselves to propose an Act, and leave it to the Parliament to ratify it. I consider that this could be very easily done, and the European members could be got not to oppose it. Something of this kind might be done, as we are trying to meet each other's views. It is said that there should be only one law for the Maoris and the Europeans. I would ask you, has there only been one law during the past for the Maoris and the Europeans? I say to you there has not been only one law. I will show you how it is with regard to lands owned by Europeans: the owners of those lands are allowed to sell them or not as they think fit. With regard to Maori lands, some of them are placed in the hands of the Public Trustee; he has to deal with them. There is a Trust Commissioner also appointed, who has the power to give authority to any sales or leases that have taken place or not as he chooses. What I say is, that these Trust Commissioners should be done away with, and, in their place, give the power to the Native Committee of each hapu. I have one more thing to speak about, and then I will sit down. With regard to the gold and other products of the land. During the present time our land is overrun with prospectors for gold. They are coming amongst us on account of the strenuous action of the European people and possibly of the Government itself. Possibly some of the people say, “Oh! the owners of the lands have sent us here to prospect;” but I reply to them by saying, “You don't know who the owners of the land are;” for, when we ask you to give us authority within our tribal boundaries, you say, “Oh, we don't know that you own the land within them;” and in the same way, when a Maori sanctions mining for gold on land, he is not the only owner of the land to give his sanction. I therefore ask that the Government should stand forth to keep the Europeans from prospecting for gold on Native land, and that notices should be circulated among Europeans that they are not to go and prospect for gold on Maori land. Now, we do not wish you to think that we want to stop prospecting, that it shall not take place hereafter, because I am anxious to have some money put into my pockets as soon as possible; but I want to have it done in a proper way, by the proper powers. There is something else in connection with our petition regarding liquor in the King Country. We sent our petition in, and in it we defined the boundaries of the land that we wished covered by the Proclamation. When the Government issued the Proclamation there was a gap in it; the portion we were most anxious about was left out. Now, I have said, Mr. Ballance, that, if you have any real affection for the Native people, this is one of the means by which you can show it. Make these regulations with regard to drink in the King Country as stringent as it is possible to make them. This is the day that we wait to hear your statement to us regarding that matter, in order that we may do what you wish us to do in accordance with the law. I will now repeat the heads of the matters that I have already brought before you. The first is the Native Land Court. We object to it, and we have shown our disapproval of it in the petition. (2.) The roads and the railway. Our objection to them is the fear that we may be rated in connection with them. (3.) We ask for extra powers to be given to the Native Committees; and (4.) That it