

you are satisfied on that point. Then, Te Ngakau has said that it is not fair that there should be several European Judges sitting in the Native Land Court and only one Assessor. I agree with him very largely there, and, in future, it is my desire that there should only be one Judge and one Assessor sitting on each case. He has asked for a Native Commissioner. I will carefully consider that question; and I will not give him an answer now, but I will carefully consider it, and give him an answer on a future occasion. I have now given answers to all the questions you have put to me. I hope those answers are clear to your minds, but, if they are not clear, I am prepared to further explain them.

*Te Wheoro*: With reference to your remarks about the voting—about the elections—I have nothing to say but that I do not find fault with it. I want you to give the Maoris a Government for themselves, and let them manage matters concerning their lands and the whole race, and the matters regarding elections will be included in that. We wish to be allowed a Government for ourselves, in the same way that the Europeans are allowed a Government for themselves; and the people that you might appoint to govern the Maoris could be found out by the Maoris electing themselves by vote; and it would be the duty of that self-government so elected to see that none of the lands were wrongfully obtained by Europeans, and they would carry out the same principles that you have enunciated here. We do not wish to do away with your Parliament, but we wish the Maoris to have one Government under the European Government. The elections would still go on, but the Maoris would have a Government for themselves. When I mentioned the Queen being the head for us all, I did not mean that we were not to consider the Government here. What we want to do is to lay before the Government here those matters in connection with the Maori race, and the lands owned by us, after we have agreed amongst ourselves, and then take them to you to ratify. All the troubles that have occurred amongst us have been during the time that Governments have been in existence. Now we think it is time to make a trial as to whether it would not be well to let the Maoris manage their own affairs for a time, and see what the result would be. That is the meaning of what I have said. I did not keep it from you when I was in the House; I mentioned it there. I then asked you to give the Maoris self-government, and you, personally, were agreeable to it; and, in consequence of that, I got the Maori members to be on the side of your Government; and that state of affairs existed at the time it was decided by the Maori people that I should go to England; and even when I was in England I considered that you were my friend in the House, and I felt sure that you would try and give the matter your best consideration, and do the best you could for the Natives. I have laid these matters before you previously; it is the policy of both of us. That is why I tell you these things. With regard to the railway—I have nothing to say about it. There are about a thousand chiefs; some say the railway is a bad thing, some say it is a good thing. Some may know all about it, but who can tell? The only thing that is really apparent about it is, that the Maoris will suffer by the railway; but I will explain what Tawhiao meant. He said, “I will agree to the railway, but leave the management of the matter with me; I am the chief.” Consider that. Do not let it cause you trouble of mind. I agree to your having the line, if you give the management of affairs to him. This is the first time you and I have heard the statement Te Ngakau made about the Native Land Court. It is perfectly right, but it does not matter, as, if you had a thousand Assessors in the Native Land Court, they would be of no effect. You must not think that I am speaking at random. I am one of the first Assessors that sat in the Court. I have seen how wrongly these things are managed. You need not ask me for particulars; it is sufficient for me to say that I have seen how wrongly they are managed. I have nothing to do with the remark of Te Ngakau about giving more Assessors, or making them equal in number to the Judges. That is a thing that has brought us to the grave. That is where our trouble lies—in this Assessor business. It has caused trouble in the past, and is the cause of trouble now. It would appear, when a block was going through the Native Land Court, as if the land was owned by the Court itself, and not by the litigants. That is why I would not have anything more to do with it—because I saw the evil in connection with it. That is why I am qualified to speak as I do, because I took part in it myself.

*Mr. Ballance*: I understand from Major Te Wheoro that he recognizes that the Parliament of this colony is supreme, and I am glad we are so far agreed; but he wants under that Parliament one Government for the Natives. But there cannot be a separate Government for the Natives under that Parliament, any more than there can be a separate Government for the Europeans. The Native people of this Island, although I have no doubt they have a great respect for Major Te Wheoro, would not be prepared to accept his rule. The different tribes have different wishes in this matter. My firm belief is that nineteen out of twenty of all the Natives desire to live under the Government, and Parliament, and institutions of this colony. What they require above all things is justice and fairness in the consideration of their interests, and that I say Parliament and the Government are prepared to give them. When he comes to see the disposition of the Parliament to extend local government among the people, and to do justice by them, he will come to accept what I have said to-day as true.

*Te Wheoro*: Hear, hear.

*Patara te Tuhi* asked for the use of the “Hinemoa” to bring Natives to a meeting to be held a Whatiwhatihoe on the 12th March.

*Mr. Ballance* said he would refer the proposal to the Government for an answer.