

soon as the subdivisions have taken place the Government will consider whether a township can be established. The district is under the Thermal Springs Act, and I presume that you are satisfied with that Act. I have found, up to the present time, that every hapu of the Arawa Tribe is thoroughly satisfied with that Act, except one; and I think I was able to convince even that particular hapu that they were best protected by allowing the Act to remain upon their land. They seemed first of all to be desirous of selling the whole of their land—a thing that would be most injurious, if not fatal, to the hapu. I strongly recommended them to retain, at any rate, ten thousand acres of land for the use of the hapu; that would be one hundred and forty-three acres to each inhabitant, and the result would be that they would be protected in future against the dangers of pauperism. Thirdly, you have asked that the bridge may be widened; the present width of the bridge is four feet, and you ask that it shall be made eight feet. You must remember that the four feet was your own proposal, and I am afraid that it has gone too far, even if it were desirable, to change it to eight feet, because I understand that tenders have been called for. I can see very little object in changing it to eight feet. You could not very well bring carriages in amongst the hot springs. I am afraid that you would be soon living on horse-flesh if you were to do that. Now, I would say one word with regard to this bridge. I am informed that you charge tourists 3s. to cross the creek here for the purpose of viewing the springs, and the tourists complain that the charge is exorbitant. When it was first proposed that this bridge should be erected, it was said that, if the bridge were put up, the Natives would reduce their charges. In other places no charge whatever is made to view the hot springs, and I think it is only a reasonable return that you should reduce the charge—say, to 1s. 6d.—as soon as the bridge is up; and I think that, if you do so, you will receive as much money as you receive now; for the present charge is prohibitive, and keeps a large number of people away: I believe, indeed, that you will receive more money if you reduce the charges, because you will be attracting tourists. I have authorized the bridge to be constructed rapidly, and hope that in a few weeks it will be completed. The fourth subject refers to the purchase of arms and ammunition. At present there is no difficulty on the part of any respectable Native in purchasing arms and ammunition. In future Mr. Johnson will have power to give authority for the purchase of arms and ammunition, and, as he will be residing in the district, you will have no difficulty in the matter. When you have received the permission you can buy them in any shop you please, and, of course, you will do then what Europeans do—that is, buy in the cheapest shop. There will be no restriction on your purchasing in any one place—you can purchase where you please. The object of the restrictions is that some Natives, who are not of very respectable character, should be prevented from getting an unlimited supply of arms and ammunition; but those restrictions do not apply to respectable Natives. I suppose that you will agree with me that there are bad Maoris as well as bad Europeans. I am happy to think that they are only few in number however. The fifth subject to which you have referred is, the rehearing of the Pukeroa-Oruawhata Block. This block is part of the Township of Ohinemutu, and the land of that township has been sold—that is to say, the leases have been sold, and people are paying rent upon those leases; it is, therefore, impossible now that the rehearing of that block can take place. You have referred to the Toa claims. That Toa question is involved in great difficulty. It was said last session that Sir Donald McLean, many years ago, had given a promise that these Toa claims should be met, and it was said that he had given this promise in the speech that he had made upon one occasion. That speech was published in the *Waka Maori*; but when we came to go into the speech to find out whether the promise was contained in it or not, we discovered that there was no allusion to that matter at all, and, therefore, there was only the statement of Mr. Sheehan that the promise had been made. This caused great surprise in the Committee, and the Committee were in doubt as to what action to take. The matter has been left over till next session, when a further inquiry will take place, and I have no doubt that justice will be done. Well, now, you have asked for a ton and a half of fencing-wire. For what road do you want this wire?

*Wiremu Pauoro*: We want it to fence the right-hand side of the Taupo Road.

*Mr. Ballance*: The Government, in some cases, have given fencing-wire for a Government road where the Natives have undertaken to supply the labour and the posts. Would you be prepared, therefore, if the Government gave the wire, to supply the labour and the posts?

*Wiremu Pauoro*: Yes.

*Mr. Ballance*: Then, since you are prepared to do that, I will recommend the matter to the Minister for Public Works. I shall ask you therefore to put your proposal in writing, stating where the road is, the mileage of the road you want fenced, and I will send it to the Minister for Public Works. I have now referred to the various subjects you have brought forward, and shall be prepared to answer any questions you may desire to put.

*Wi Keepa Rangipuwhe*: With regard to the place where the Court should be held when the rehearing of the Rotomahana-Parekarangi Block takes place, if—as I think it will be—it is found that this rehearing was granted on the application of Tuhourangi, and that application still remains, I think that the choice of the place should be left with Tuhourangi, because, when the adjudication took place formerly, Tuhourangi were put to great straits in providing food; and it was found that, although Tuhourangi had to bring their food from a great distance, yet they were able to supply food for their adversaries. Tuhourangi thinks that they, being the most vitally interested in this block, should have the rehearing fixed for Te Wairoa. The bulk of the people who have to go there, apart from Tuhourangi, will be the counter-claimants, and the Tuhourangi will be able to provide food with the assistance of Ngatiwahiao. My plan would be this: that all lands in the vicinity of Ohinemutu should be heard at Ohinemutu, and all lands near Wairoa should be heard at Wairoa. If this request is granted, Tuhourangi will build a house expressly for the accommodation of the Court.

*Mr. Ballance*: That is a very liberal offer, and if you will put it in writing in a letter to me I will forward it to the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court and ask for an immediate answer, and I shall forward the answer to the Chairman of the Committee. There is one question that I asked