

good. Ngaiterangi, so far, have confined their speeches to greeting you. They have not yet brought forward the subjects which they wish to have discussed. I repeat what the other speakers have said with regard to your spending a long time amongst us.

*Mr. Ballance* : Friends of Tauranga, of the great Ngaiterangi Tribe, I thank you very cordially for your welcome. I have heard your words, and I am very glad to think that the people of the Ngaiterangi Tribe are glad to see me. You have referred to Sir Donald McLean, who was a great Native Minister, who went amongst the people and won their affection. I think that Sir Donald McLean did his duty in that respect, but, from my personal knowledge of him, it is true that he bore great love to the Maori people. I was in Parliament with him for two years, and watched his great anxiety to serve the best interests of the race. Sir Donald McLean died, but he left behind him people equally desirous of promoting your welfare. I think it is a good practice for the Native Minister, who ought to be the friend and guardian of the Native people, to pay frequent visits to them at their various settlements, as much as time will permit; but there are many hapus in New Zealand, and I am afraid that, if I have to see you all, I cannot devote much time to each. It has been said by one speaker that my love will not be great for the people if my time is short amongst them. I cannot agree to that sentiment, for I have many engagements, many appointments, to other tribes, which I must keep. I shall therefore ask you not to measure my regard for you by the short time I have to spend amongst you. I shall be compelled to leave to-night in order to attend a great meeting at Gisborne on the 24th of this month; that appointment was made many months ago, and the people have assembled there from various parts, and the engagement must be kept; but I trust that this is not my last visit to the people of Ngaiterangi, and therefore, if my time is short on the present occasion, I hope that I shall have an opportunity of seeing you before very long. So long as I remain Native Minister I shall consider it my duty to understand and hear what the people have to say, in order that I may know their wants, and be able to meet them and redress their grievances. You have referred to my good name which has come amongst you; that is to my mind a very flattering statement. I will tell you on what I think that good name rests. It is my earnest desire to treat the Natives as a people who are entitled to kindness, to justice, and to consideration. We are all fellow-citizens under the law, and my efforts are being directed to bring the two races together, on the ground of equal justice and protection to the Native people. I will not remain Native Minister and allow you to be wronged in any respect without standing up in your defence. It is my duty to protect you in the possession of your lands, and to see that they are not wrested from you by unworthy dealings, but that, when you part with your lands, it shall be after due deliberation and in the light of day. My desire, and also the desire of the Government, is to see that the Native people are educated. It is only by the education of the young that you can ever hope to take the same position as Europeans. We are therefore establishing Native schools throughout the country, and we hope that the older people will support these schools and see that they are properly attended. It is our desire to extend to you larger powers of local government, so that you may be able to protect yourselves to a large extent, that is to say, to have the right through your Committees to do certain things through the law of the Colony. It has been said that you are not living in a state of prosperity; but there is no reason, with your large landed possessions, why you might not in the future attain to a position of great prosperity and happiness. That prosperity will largely depend upon yourselves, and it will be the earnest desire of the Government to assist you in attaining it. One of the speakers has read a letter which appeared in the *Gazette*, addressed to the people of Ngapuhi. I wrote that letter in order to remove a false impression which is obtaining in the King country and among certain sections of the Ngapuhi Tribe. Some foolish people thought that they could, by going to England, obtain certain powers from the English Parliament. I told them, what all intelligent people know, that the British Parliament cannot interfere in the affairs of this colony. We have a Parliament of our own, and that Parliament is independent within the shores of this colony. The power of the Queen is here just the same as it is at Home, and her representative is the Governor. The laws of the colony therefore are supreme, and all grievances must be redressed under them. It may be that some of the laws are not perfect, and do not work well for the Native people; but I believe, if the grievances under which they rest are only made known to Parliament, that it is sufficiently strong to pass just laws. I shall be prepared next session to submit to Parliament measures which affect the welfare of the Native people, and to remove some of the grievances under which the Natives are now resting. I therefore hope that you will bring your grievances before me to-day, so that we may be able to discuss them. It is by discussion and by petition that those grievances will be made known and remedied; and I am prepared to give a respectful hearing to any grievances which you may have to urge. I again thank you for the very cordial welcome which you have given me, and I will now ask you to proceed to the matters which you have to bring before me.

*Te Mete Rankawa* : I will now mention the subjects which affect Ngaiterangi very deeply. The first matter to which I will allude is the Rating Act. The second subject is the restrictions which the Government have placed upon the land between Ngakuriawhare and Wairakei, that is to say, the Native lands. Third, about the Crown grants to lands which have passed the Court or been awarded to the Natives. Fourth, with regard to the Queen's authority extending below high-water mark. Fifth, with regard to the issuing of arms and ammunition to the Natives. Sixth, Ngaiterangi wish that they should have a District Committee of their own—to have a separate district. Seventh, with regard to the Thermal Springs Act: that has been brought from forty miles inland—from Rotorua—and made to extend over our lands. Eighth, with regard to Road Boards. Ninth, we ask that the Government will be pleased to call a member of the Ngaiterangi Tribe to the Upper House, seeing that the choice of calling a person to the Upper House rests with the Government, so that there may be three Native members in the Legislative Council. The Government are always passing laws affecting the Native lands. In the opinion of the Ngaiterangi people the