

but I am the only one called upon to pay rates. I live at Tauranga, but part of my land is situated near that road. That is all I have to say on that subject. I will now speak with regard to the coast-line—that is, with regard to the high-water mark. Now, with regard to the land below high-water mark immediately in front of where I live, I consider that that is part and parcel of my own land. This land formerly belonged to a tribe called Ngatimarama, but we came from the East Coast and took it by conquest. I will look upon the land below high-water mark as being part of my own garden. From time immemorial I have had this land, and had authority over all the food in the sea. Te Maere was a fishing-ground of mine. Onake, that is a place from which I have from time immemorial obtained pipis. Te Rona is another pipi-bed. Te Karaka is another place. I am now speaking of the fishing-grounds inside the Tauranga Harbour. My mana over these places has never been taken away. I have always held authority over these fishing-places and preserved them; and no tribe is allowed to come here and fish without my consent being given. But now, in consequence of the word of the Europeans that all the land below high-water mark belongs to the Queen, people have trampled upon our ancient Maori customs and are constantly coming here whenever they like to fish. I ask that our Maori custom shall not be set aside in this manner, and that our authority over these fishing-grounds may be upheld. The whole of this inland sea has been subdivided by our ancestors, and each portion belongs to a proper owner, and the whole of the rights within the Tauranga Harbour have been apportioned among our own different people; and so with regard to the fishing-grounds outside the heads: those are only small spots. I am speaking of the fishing-grounds where hapuku and tarakihi are caught. Those grounds have been handed down to us by our ancestors. This Maori custom of ours is well established, and none of the inland tribes would dare to go and fish on those places without obtaining the consent of the owners. I am not making this complaint out of any selfish desire to keep all the fishing-grounds for myself; I am only striving to regain the authority which I inherited from my ancestors. I ask that the Queen's sovereignty shall not extend to those fishing-grounds of ours, but remain out in the deep water away beyond Tuhua. These are all the subjects upon which we wish to hear your opinion. We have now laid them before you. In our opinion they affect the Natives very deeply. I dare say some Natives have private matters to bring before you, but these matters which have been spoken about affect the whole of the people. Knowing that they affect the whole of the Maori people, we take this opportunity of bringing them before you. If I had seen that any of these matters were improper, I would have told the people not to mention them; but I think that they are all legitimate matters for discussion, particularly with regard to the issue of licenses for arms and ammunition. I know that Natives in other districts can obtain them more easily than we can. Why should Ngaiterangi be debarred from obtaining these privileges, seeing that all the other Natives get them? Ngaiterangi are not a disloyal tribe that they should be treated in this way. Ngaiterangi will not buy arms and ammunition in great quantities, but only when they want to obtain birds. The only guns that we have now in our possession are guns that we have obtained in the fighting at Motiti against Ngapuhi in 1830. The only more modern gun that I have is one that Sir George Grey gave me.

*Mr. Ballance*: I agree that the subjects which you have brought before me are proper subjects for discussion, and I admit that you have put them before me in a very fair way, and have shown great skill in the manner in which you have discussed them. I cannot agree, however, with your reasons in many cases, and will give my reasons where I differ from you. Now, I shall take the subjects in the order in which you have presented them. First of all, with reference to rating, Ngatai says that he has been treated in an exceptional manner; if he has, that undoubtedly is wrong: but I am not sure that he has been so treated. The County Council and Road Board have no power under the law to make exceptional treatment of any one. Ngatai says that some have not been rated, while he has been rated. Now, the reason, I think, is, that Ngatai holds the land in his own name, while those who have not been rated, that is to say, other Maoris who have not been rated, do not hold the land in their own names. But you ask that Europeans and Natives shall be treated alike, under the same law. Now, I agree to that, but will you say that any Europeans have not been rated in the same way as Ngatai? Why are rates paid at all? To make and keep in repair the roads. How can roads be kept in repair if rates are not paid by the owners of land? The road is for the benefit of owners of land, to get their produce to market, and without the roads they cannot go to market. If, therefore, Ngatai holds land in his own right, in the same way as Europeans hold land, I think it is only fair and just that he should pay rates as Europeans do. But he says that other Maoris do not pay rates. Well, that is for their benefit, I suppose; but let Ngatai compare himself with the Europeans and see whether he is unfairly treated. If the Road Board treat him in an exceptional manner compared with the Europeans, then the action of the Road Board is wrong. But if the Road Board treat him the same as it does Europeans, then I think the action of the Road Board is right. Now, if Ngatai can show me better reasons, I will submit; but I think that my reasons are stronger than his. He will have an opportunity of discussing the question after I have answered the others. Now, I come to the question of the restrictions on land. Te Mete asks that those restrictions should be lifted. Well, I think that the owners of land ought to have the power of dealing with their own land; but these restrictions have been put on to give them greater power to deal with their own land. Most of the evils with regard to the land and to the Natives have arisen from the practice of a Native who owns a share of land selling it to a European: the Waitara war was caused in that way; but we wish to prevent that practice, and these restrictions are only kept on until the Maoris have power to deal with their own land. I propose next session to bring in a Bill to give the owners of a block of land power to elect a Committee, and this Committee shall have power to either sell or lease the land of the people who own it. In the meantime the restrictions will be kept on, to prevent, as I say, one or two persons selling the interests of others as well as their own; and I think, therefore, you will agree that these restrictions in the meantime are right. The third subject is with regard to Crown