

we have to make is, that we were never informed what the regulations were affecting that ferry. There is another matter, which concerns Te Awapuni, which was formerly a lagoon or lake, and is near the mouth of the big river. The Waipoua runs into it. I signed an application for a survey of that land, so that our claims to the swamp might be adjudicated upon. I received an answer to the effect that that land belonged to the Queen. There is a Crown grant for a portion of land outside it, on the sea side of this lagoon. All the land surrounding it has been Crown-granted. This is all I have to bring before you.

*Ruka te Aratapu*, of Waiapu, said: I desire to greet you, the Native Minister; it is for you to extend relief to the Native people. The Native people on the East Coast are rejoiced at your having come to see them, and bid you welcome, because we are in hopes that good will result from your meeting us. It may be that you will be able to advise some measures for the good of the Native people. The Europeans were acquainted with the manners of the Native people formerly. It was known then that the Natives were a foolish, ignorant people; but when the good tidings, that is, when Christianity, was brought here, then we knew that the sun shone in the sky. We know now that we are living in much greater prosperity than formerly: but, although we are living under the law, a great many troubles have come upon us, and there is great wailing amongst the people. I am not bringing an accusation against the Europeans only. I admit that this was the fault of the Natives. I wish to speak in support of some of the subjects mentioned by Wi Peiwhairangi. You know that some of the subjects alluded to by Wi Peiwhairangi have been brought under the notice of Parliament. I will speak concerning the grievances under which the Native people suffer which have been caused by the action of the Native Land Court. There are many Natives who are great landowners; the law requires that they shall pay certain fees before they can bring their land before the Court; on account of their not having money to pay those fees they are unable to do so. On the other hand, there are Natives who are very small owners in the land, but, because they have money and know how to conduct their business, they are able to bring their claims before the Court. Then, lands in one district are taken to a distant Court for adjudication, and people are precluded from attending on account of their having no money. These are real grievances, which deeply affect the Maori people. I will now speak about the applications for succession. This is a great grievance with us. Supposing there are ten grantees in a block and one dies and leaves two or three children, they have to pay for the succession order. Supposing there are only twenty acres in this block of land, and there are ten owners, consequently they only have two acres each. When one of the grantees dies, it may be that he is succeeded by four or five children; their shares in the land are very small, not a quarter of an acre each, perhaps. I mean that the fees are altogether out of proportion to the value of the land. These people will have to continue paying for these succession orders, and, when the successors died, successors to successors will have to pay, so that there will be no end to it, and this land will be a constant liability. The Maoris are a very ignorant people, but they are quite alive to the fact that this matter presses very heavily upon them. We ask that you will do away with the fees for making succession orders. I wish to speak about roads running through Native land. With regard to this, we know instances where the roads could have been taken by much shorter lines; but the surveyor, having full authority, followed a much longer route, and the consequence was that a much larger quantity of our land was taken for the road. Of course, if there are any difficulties in the way of the road being taken straight, it would be quite different; but I am speaking of cases where the line has been made unnecessarily long, and a much greater quantity of our land taken in consequence. Some of our people have been sent to gaol on account of having obstructed the surveyors laying out the roads in this manner. It arose this way: The road had already been laid off, but the surveyor, having full authority no doubt to do so, came and made a deviation of that road. Some of us went to the surveyor and represented that we ought to be consulted in the matter, but he would not listen to us. The Natives took away the tools belonging to the surveyor; they were brought up for it, and had to pay £40. Eruera Pahou was one of the offending parties. He paid £40, but the others were sent to gaol.

*Mr. Ballance*: Was it a county road, or a Government road?

*Ruka te Aratapu*: It was a county road.

*Wi Pere*: I forgot to allude to the work of erecting trig. stations on the East Coast. Surveyors from the Bay of Plenty have been doing that work. The surveyors in the Bay of Plenty surveying Native land, instead of cutting the boundary-lines, have been taking the points between the various trigs. and making those the boundary-lines.

*Mr. Ballance*: Before proceeding to speak upon the subjects brought forward to-day, I should like to say a few words with regard to the law. I said yesterday that, in my opinion, the time of war had passed for ever—that is, war between the two races in this colony—and that the time of discussion had come. You have referred to your troubles, and I am not prepared to deny that you have many grievances; and the great question that has to be settled is, how are these grievances to be redressed. I say, and say deliberately, not by violence and obstruction. That course can produce no good result. It would only mean destruction to the Native people, injury to the colony, with, perhaps, a little benefit to a few evil-designed persons. Therefore I think that the true remedy is in meeting together and discussing questions relating to the two races openly and in the light of day. For the Government of which I am a member I will say this: that it is its earnest desire to meet the Native people fairly, and try to understand their wants and their troubles; and, when we have arrived at a knowledge of them, it is the duty of the Government to bring the questions before Parliament, so that the laws may be improved. In many respects the law may not be perfect, but the place where perfection may be obtained is Parliament, and no where else. Many of the existing laws are good, but they are badly administered. In such cases the responsibility rests upon the Government of administering them better. Where the laws are defective and should be made better, the responsibility rests upon Parliament and upon the Government. In