

blocks which have been dealt with by the Court have since been sold absolutely. The people who are in treaty for these lands are waiting until the three months laid down by law expires, when they will conclude the purchase; and the result will be that the Natives, having tasted the sweets of getting money, will still offer lands. My wish is the same as yours, that is, that proper Committees may have the administration of the land, so that the whole of the dealings may be clear and aboveboard, for the reason that the land now remaining in the possession of the Natives is very small indeed. A former law provided that no smaller quantity than fifty acres would be deemed sufficient for each Native. I believe such a law was passed some time ago. Now we find some Natives who have no land at all. I will not accuse the Europeans of bringing about this state of things. The blame rests equally upon the Natives. There is fault on both sides. I am not opposing the Court for the sake of obstruction, but rather think that we should wait for the present until a better law is passed by the forthcoming Parliament; but it may be that a majority in the House will prevent such a law being passed, and the result will be that, when one or two years have passed there will be no land left to the Maori people. I am in hopes that, if these matters are held over until a new law is passed, then the Maoris will be able to retain a little land, at all events. I will now speak with regard to what you have told us to-day. I heartily approve of what you have told the Natives at this meeting, because you agree that the Native land duties should be paid yearly instead of in a lump sum. I am the more emphatic upon this point, because it bears heavily upon the Natives as well as upon the Europeans. The only people who are not injuriously affected by this law are the rich Europeans: men with five or ten thousand pounds each. This burden does not press heavily upon them, but it weighs very heavily upon the poor man, and prevents him from renting Native lands, and it stands in the way of the Native lands being occupied and improved. Great evils have resulted from this law. I will now speak concerning Committees to administer blocks of land. I agree that the law about Crown grants having a limited number of people only is altogether wrong. The great fault has been this: that when those Crown grants were issued no trust was implied in them. The law absolutely gave the land to the ten persons; they were not appointed trustees. The law regulating the issue of certificates is equally bad. No trust was imposed in the certificates, but absolute power was given to the people whose names were inserted to lease or otherwise. Under the Act of 1873 every owner had his name inserted in a memorial of ownership, and each man, woman, or child had a voice in the matter. The great evil arising from that law is this: that Europeans were enabled to come and buy Natives' shares. I heartily indorse what you say with regard to the real owners of the land having the administration of it. The Native people are all of that mind also. It should be the duty of the Frauds Commissioner to see that the Committee gave effect to the wishes of the people; and a clause should be inserted to this effect: that the Local Committees shall have no power to deal with the land unless in accordance with the wishes of the owners; and, in the case of Crown grants, it should be provided that Natives shall not be allowed to sell their respective shares unless the tribe and the Committee first agree, so that the Local Committee shall be the mouthpiece of the tribe, and carry out their wishes, the members of the Committee being selected from the owners of the land. The Land Board should be formed of two Maoris and one European, elected by the Government and the Committee. The duty of the Committee will be to explain to the Board what the wishes of the owners are—whether they wish to place stock upon it, or lease it, or sell it. These are the ideas of the Maoris with regard to the duties of those Committees. With regard to your suggestion that the Chairmen of the Native Committees shall be members *ex officio*, I think that a very good suggestion; but that must be decided at some future meeting. But with regard to our wishes generally, you have replied to them, and we are very much satisfied with what you have said. What you said is quite right, that you are not able to give effect to our wishes regarding all of those matters. Some of those matters will have to be referred to Parliament. We know that it is impossible for you to give effect to our wishes with regard to certain matters at present, when you have not the power to do so, but which it will be necessary for you to refer to Parliament. The whole of the words which you spoke to this meeting have given us satisfaction, and we consider that the various questions which were brought before you have been fully answered. The only thing about which we are not perfectly satisfied is this adjournment of the Waiomatatini Court. There is another matter which you did not quite answer to our satisfaction, and that is with regard to the Native Committees; but that rests with you; you may be able to give your attention to it before the House meets. It is with regard to their setting to work to devise laws for the benefit of the Europeans as well as the Natives, so that the old state of things might be altered. The old state of things was, that the Europeans alone made laws respecting the Native people. I ask you to take us into your confidence, and make new laws under which we are to live in future. Your coming here and having these matters brought before you is a parallel case with my going to Parliament to make known the wishes of the people. I brought an Act before the Parliament last session to endeavour to give effect to the wishes of the Native people; but, owing to the forms of the House, this Bill of mine was put lower and lower, till at last the session closed without my being able to bring it forward; and a great many European members had their measures treated in the same way. In consequence of my Bill having been treated in this manner, the Natives think it would be far better for you to take the matter up and bring in a measure, because it is well known that the Government alone are able to get any measures they wish passed through the House. We ask you to make this a part of your policy, and not leave it to the Maoris. I ask you not to hesitate in having the Waiomatatini Court adjourned, but to act promptly in the matter. You say that you have not the power to adjourn; but, in the event of some great trouble arising in consequence of the action of that Court, the responsibility of going there and putting an end to that trouble will fall upon you. If any person is killed or injured, will the responsibility be placed upon the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, or will it fall upon you? Do not think that I am making a threat; it is only a prophecy of mine; it is only within the range of possibility that some trouble may occur. I say this because it is only some Natives in each hapu