

Wellington last year I saw the Bill that was then before the House, and I then said, "Let the teeth be taken out of that Bill"—that is, let the objectionable parts be expunged. Mr. Ballance was the Native Minister, and my request was agreed to—the objectionable provisions of the Bill were struck out. I was pleased when that was done—I was satisfied. Since I have been in Wellington on this occasion I have examined the provisions of this Bill. I may compare these provisions to a captain directing a ship—the real authority is vested in the Government.

47. *Hon. Mr. Bryce.*] That is not very clear?—What I wish to explain is that some provisions of the Bill are not perfectly clear, some portions of it are rather involved.

48. *The Chairman.*] Will you state what portions?—Why should I fight out between the opposite portions.

*Mr. Grace:* What he means is that the Bill which pretended to be friendly to the Natives was not really so.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce:* I do not think it will do for us to interfere in any way with the interpretation.

*Colonel Trimble:* Let him go right on; he has something connected in his mind—he knows perfectly well what he is driving at.

*Wahanui:* I think that some of the provisions of the Bill are not perfectly clear. I have noticed one or two provisions that are not clear—that is, they have a greater meaning than I can quite explain. I allude to the power that the Governor will have in his Council with regard to making regulations. The Governor in his Council is to make regulations if any owners of land make representations to him that he can give effect to their wishes or suggestions. I think this is the real meaning of the Bill: to place power in the hands of the Government. I feel this: that I am in a difficult position. I have studied the Bill as it was first brought out a few days ago, but it was afterwards altered; and then when I have mastered the alterations it is again altered. But my great desire in coming here is to have the authority of administering my own land—to have that vested in ourselves. Why should our land be taken from us, or why should our authority over that land be held back? This was the representation I made to Mr. Bryce formerly, and again I make that representation to this Committee. I have omitted to make a statement which I should now make. It was on account of becoming acquainted with certain provisions in this Bill that we drew up amendments which have been submitted to Mr. Ballance.

49. *Mr. Locke.*] Are those the amendments of Wi Pere?—Aye; we all support these amendments or approve of them. I gave Mr. Butler some amendments and asked him to translate them into English.

50. *Colonel Trimble.*] Are they included in those that Wi Pere has given notice of?—I do not know.

51. *Hon. Mr. Bryce.*] But probably Wahanui has seen Wi Pere on the matter. Is that so?—They have not been included with the amendments which I have seen of Wi Pere's. My propositions may have been put in since; but they were not at first.

*Hon. Mr. Ballance:* But they have been substantially put in.

52. *Mr. Hobbs.*] You said there were some amendments that you suggested to members; in what clauses would they be found?—I cannot find them until I have seen the clauses. I can only reply to the question by saying that I have given them to Mr. Butler to translate.

53. *Hon. Mr. Bryce.*] By Mr. Butler you mean, I presume, the Private Secretary of the Native Minister?—Yes.

54. How do you know these amendments were in the Bill?—I have not seen them yet; and I do not know whether they have been included in those proposed amendments.

*The Chairman:* The Interpreter brought up some amendments this morning.

*Hon. Mr. Ballance:* I understood they were embraced with Wi Pere's.

55. *The Chairman.*] You have seen Wi Pere's?—Yes; but they are not included in Wi Pere's.

56. *Mr. Hobbs.*] Then, as a matter of fact, you do not know whether these amendments are in this Bill or not?—They are not included in the amendments drawn up by Wi Pere and ourselves. I have not seen them since, so I cannot say whether they have been incorporated with the new amendments.

57. You speak about the "objectionable" clauses in the Bill, and state to this Committee that you protested against your land being taken out of your own management, and that you find the same "objectionable" clauses in this Bill?—There is the same principle in this Bill that was embodied in the Bill of last year: there is the same meaning, the same drift, as in the Bill of last year.

58. What is the principal objection to this Bill?—I have already stated that it was not in accordance with our ideas of Maori custom. For instance, this is one part that I take objection to: it states that the Governor shall have power in Council to do certain things.

59. I do not understand you to say that the Governor has such power at present?—

*Mr. Ormond:* The Governor has no such power as he is referring to now; he is referring, no doubt, to the last part of the Bill—to the regulations.

*Mr. Hobbs:* I understood him to say that it was to the whole principle of the Bill that he objected, as giving too much power into the hands of the Government.

*Mr. Ormond:* He says that the words "Governor in Council," alluding to the Governor's power to make regulations, are in the Bill; and he asks whether they have been struck out.

60. *Mr. Hobbs.*] Do you approve of the Boards and Committees provided by the Bill?—I petitioned that we might be allowed to elect our own Committee; but my Committee would be different from those provided for in this Act.

61. In what way would it be different?—I want our own Committee to have full power to administer the lands; and the whole of the administration should be vested in the Committee.

62. I want to know whether you wish for a special or particular clause for your Committee?—Yes; that was the request contained in my petition: that we should have a special Committee of our own,