

85. Do you approve of the majority in a block of land—say, fifty-one out of a hundred owners—being able to sell the whole block, the forty-nine being unable to sell?—I do not approve of that principle. I think, if the majority wish to sell and the others do not, then the portion of the land belonging to the non-consenting owners should be cut off.

86. Would you consent to that?—I think I should approve of that being done, provided that that land has not been placed in the hands of a Committee.

87. But it is in the hands of a Committee under this Act?—If the land has been placed in the hands of a Committee, if fifty-one wish to sell and forty-nine object, if the Committee is agreeable, then let the land be divided.

88. Look at clause 36. I wish to ask you if you want the Government to be the purchaser of your land?

*Hon. Mr. Ballance* : That is not a fair question.

89. *Mr. Hobbs*.] Then I will put it another way. Would you approve of private persons not being allowed to buy land from Natives?—My idea is this : I want to have the power to sell to the highest bidder. I look upon the man who gives the highest price as my nearest relative. I wish to have the power to give my land to the highest bidder ; but, really, it is I who ought to ask questions of the Committee.

*The Chairman* : We are seeking knowledge from you.

*Wahanui* : And am not I in the same position, seeking knowledge from the Committee?

90. *Mr. Hobbs*.] I look upon you as a great authority in these matters, and I have always done so. What we want is to get plenty of light from you on this section. I wish to ask, Do you think that the Natives are prevented by it from selling to private individuals?

*Hon. Mr. Bryce* : "Direct?"

*Hon. Mr. Ballance* : It is important that should be understood—"direct."

*Mr. Ormond* : That is certainly what is meant.

91. *Mr. Hobbs*.] Will you answer the question?—What I want is for the Committee to have power—full power—to sell to the highest bidder and to the Governor, as the case might be.

92. Then you say you do not want any restrictions?—No ; I do not approve of these restrictions at all.

93. *Hon. Mr. Ballance*.] Does he mean the restriction which prevents Natives selling to outsiders?

*The Chairman* : He wants his Committee to have the fullest power, without any restriction.

94. *Mr. Hobbs*.] Do you approve of the clause in this Bill which enables the Government to legalize past transactions in Native land before it passed through the Court (clauses 55 and 56)?

*Hon. Mr. Ballance* : Clauses 47 to 54.

*Mr. Hobbs* : He is aware that there are plenty of transactions between Natives and Europeans without any authority whatever in violation of law.

*Mr. Ormond* : Outside the law altogether?

*Hon. Mr. Ballance* : Not a violation of law, but outside the law.

95. *Mr. Hobbs*.] Do you, Wahanui, approve of these clauses?—I do not approve of these clauses.

*Mr. Hobbs* : I wish Wahanui to understand that I am anxious to get his opinion on these clauses, because he might say in future that he was not asked these questions.

96. *Mr. Grace*.] Does Wahanui understand that under this Act there will be not one Committee, but probably fifty or sixty Committees?—I do understand that there will be a great number of Committees, and that, if this Bill is passed, our land will be cut up into portions, belonging to the respective hapus. Each hapu will have its own Committee.

97. Is that what you want?—Yes ; I would like to see this done. There are a great number of hapus in my district.

98. *Mr. Locke*.] He speaks of hapus. Does he intend that each hapu should have a Committee?—No ; the question is one not for the hapus, but for the owners of the land. The Ngati-maniapoto and the Ngatiraukawa are distinct tribes. The lands belonging to these tribes should be marked off.

*Hon. Mr. Ballance* : He has already said he would like a Committee for each block.

*Mr. Locke* : He wants evidently a tribal Committee.

*Wahanui* : I accept this idea of a Committee because it is a European idea ; the Europeans have Committees.

99. *Mr. Ormond*.] In answering a question by Mr. Ballance you referred to a letter written by Mr. Ormsby?—The letter I received was not from Ormsby, it was from Taonui and others.

100. I was referring to a letter written to Mr. Ballance, and to which you referred in answering Mr. Ballance's question?—I do not know anything about that letter ; I do not know what statement it contained.

101. Are you aware that Mr. Ballance read that letter and conveyed to the House the statement contained in it that you, Wahanui, approved of this Bill?—No ; I was not in the House when that statement was made.

102. Was Ormsby authorized by you to make any such statement to Mr. Ballance?—No ; I never authorized him to speak in that manner on my behalf. What I said was, "Do not take any action until you have heard from me."

103. Do you know that that letter conveyed the approval of other chiefs of the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe, such as Rewi and others?—I do not know that these statements were made. I was not there when the letter was written. I do not know what the contents of that letter were.

104. Do you think that the machinery of this Bill, so far as you understand it, will lead to the settlement of those lands which the Natives do not want for their own use, in a way that will be profitable to them and profitable to Europeans?—I want to understand whether this Bill applies only to Native land? [*Mr Ormond* : Yes.] Then, I ask, did a request come from the Natives to Europeans to bring in a Bill for administering Native lands?