

The law is upon the statute-book, and if you like to take advantage of it you can do so to-morrow. Well, now, I will tell you what pained me very much yesterday. I was told that Hori Ngati, of Tauranga, had sent messengers ahead of me endeavouring to injure the Native race by saying you were to take up a negative position—that you were not to listen to the Prime Minister. I only mention this because, if it is true, he is no friend of the Native race. I would like to know from any one here whether they have heard anything of this. I do not want to do him an injustice, I simply want to find out whether there is any foundation for this rumour. If you have heard anything of that, you had better speak to me through your chief, and let me know. Let Mr Carroll know later on, because I am determined to get to the bottom of this. If I find people poisoning the minds of the Native race against what is in their best interest, and endeavouring to frustrate what we are striving to do on their behalf, I intend to take very strong measures indeed in reference to those people, and it is all the more grievous where the person pretends to be friendly to the Government, and is receiving favours from the Government, and at the same time behind the back of the Government is doing them an injury, and an injury to his own people. If you have heard anything of this you can tell my colleague, and I shall be very pleased indeed, because it is in your own interest to help me to prevent any misconduct of that kind. I now come to the most pleasant thing that has happened this afternoon. Nothing gave me so much pleasure as the request made for school-accommodation. Now, to see to the education of your children was one of the promises made on behalf of the Queen when your forefathers agreed to acknowledge her sovereignty, and become her people, and I shall do all that I can to give effect to that condition. I look upon the education of the Native race, and the establishment of these schools, as being of paramount importance. Under the altered circumstances in which we live, if you do not receive an education, then you will be compelled for all time to hold inferior positions. We have proved by those who have gone to our schools and colleges that you have intellect, and your children only require an opportunity to go to the schools to hold the same positions as the pakehas. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to find representatives of the Native race in the Government service. I have seen them in different departments, I have seen them in commercial positions, and I would like to see them much more numerous than they are throughout the colony. Those parents who neglect to give their children an opportunity of receiving an education are not good parents, they are doing their children a very grievous wrong. But you bring it home to the Government when you say you send your children (and there is an average attendance of over thirty-four) to this raupo building. The school site has been surveyed, and on my return to Wellington I will see the Minister of Education, and will tell him that, as Minister for Public Works, I shall be only too glad to put up a building for you, so that your children can go to a decent school, and if we prove our sincerity by putting up a building, we hope you will prove that you are sincere by sending your children to that school. Now, as regards to-morrow, to-day was rather wet, as you know, and the distance from Poro Poro to here not being more than two miles, the Natives there ought to have come and seen me. It was not for me to go and see them, when it was only two miles to come. People who have serious business to bring before the Prime Minister, business that affects them more than the Prime Minister, and where the business is almost of life and death, it seems strange to me that they would not go two miles to meet the Minister and tell him their business. They want a bridge, I believe, as well as the Europeans. The latter came ten and twelve miles to-day to let me know this bridge was wanted. Well, if the pakehas can come twelve miles to let me know their wants, surely the Natives could have come two miles to let me know theirs; but I was told what they had to say to me, and they desired the whole tribe should hear it. I suppose they meant the women and children—there was, however, nothing to stop the men coming here. Probably the women and children could not come, therefore they want me to come and talk to them. I am not afraid to meet women, and I love children, but it is an unusual request, if that is what they wanted me to do, to go and meet their women and children. If to-morrow—as I go past—time will permit me to spend a few minutes at Poro Poro, I shall have very great pleasure in seeing them. But the time will be very short, and it would have been much better to have let me know to-day what they wanted than to-morrow. But probably I am doing them an injustice, perhaps it is only Maori custom—that they would like me to go and visit their village, so that they could give me a welcome there, and I will accept it in that spirit. Now, I am asked to go to Galatea. I am a stranger in this part of the colony, and do not know how far it is, and what road I should have to go. I have been asked to go to some strange places during this trip; at one place I was asked to cross the Jordan, at another I was asked to go to Jerusalem. Where Galatea is I do not know, and I do not know whether you have got a Galilee or not, but the business I was asked to go there upon was the purchase of Native lands, and the representatives of the owners of this land stated to me that they (the owners) desired to see me, and desired to sell this land to the Government. As I am assured that this place is on my road, the representatives of the Natives from Galatea may inform the latter that I will call there, and be prepared to go into business with them as regards acquiring the lands they have mentioned. I have, therefore, only one more subject, and that is the survey of the block of land which was mentioned here—the Ruatoki. I will see the Natives to-morrow on my journey, and, after I have seen them, I will send word back as to the decision of the Government, but I desire to confer with the whole of the claimants before I finally decide. If I were to say to-day, Yes, without consulting them, they would have a grievance, and would say, “You knew you were coming through our district, if you were our friend, you would have spoken to us before coming to a decision. I desire to treat the Natives the same as the Europeans, and, in doing this, I am following the same course as I would with regard to Europeans. I think it is always best to reason with the people of both races to explain matters to them, to appeal to their good sense not to try to coerce them. If you convince a person—no matter what country he belongs to—that what you are doing is in his interest, he submits with a good grace. I have told you what the law is, and told you of the great power that is vested in the Government of the day. I have told you that Parliament has said that all lands must have an