

draw up legislation which will meet the views of all. The Board Bill is the Government side, then there are the Bills of Messrs. Wi Pere and Hone Heke, and all the other Bills, to a certain extent of a similar nature, but they are not recognised. At any rate, they are before the House. Now, these petitions pray that some sort of compromise—some sort of measure—be brought in between these conflicting Bills, which will be a measure endeavouring to bring things together; and what I submit is this: that what we ought to do is for each of us—myself, Mr. Heke, Mr. Wi Pere, and Mr. Carroll—to give the particular views we advocate as to the direction in which legislation should go, and then, with that material all before us, we should endeavour to construct the Bill which we want the Government to pass.

*The Chairman:* I understand that is exactly what the Committee are trying to do.

*Mr. Kaihau:* We are dealing with nothing but the Board up to the present.

*The Chairman:* I understand Mr. Carroll is endeavouring to elicit from Mr. Heke, by means of questions, more explicitly his views with reference to the Native lands. He is trying to get a more explicit expression of Mr. Heke's views with regard to what the legislation should be.

*Hon. Mr. Carroll:* The position of things as I understand it is this: these petitions are a request to the House that a short measure dealing with Native lands should be passed during this present session of Parliament. Well, the Government is desirous of meeting that wish, but before the Government takes any definite action the Government is desirous of hearing the views of Messrs. Kaihau, Heke, and Wi Pere upon this question, so that they may be able when they come to frame a Bill to give effect, as nearly as may be possible, to the desires of the people who ask that such a measure should be passed, and I do not wish to be misunderstood. While I am asking these questions of Mr. Heke I am not doing so with a view of establishing the Native Land Board Bill, or any other Bill for that matter. I am simply asking the questions not with a view to advocating any line of argument, but simply with a view to elucidate points in the statement that has been made by the witness, and generally to clear up the ground, so that we may have before us a clear understanding of what is the position. You see when a man makes a speech he very often makes a speech which is entirely clear and understandable from his own personal point of view, but then there is also the point of view of the listener, and if the listener wants to understand any point which he thinks he does not quite grasp the meaning of, then he exercises his privilege of asking questions with a view to learning what is the actual meaning of the speaker. Of course, if the Committee wishes that questions should cease to be put, and that the bare statement of the witnesses should be taken, I am quite willing.

*The Chairman:* I think the Committee's desire is, as far as possible, if they do not understand the statement made by the witness, to glean further information on this subject by questioning.

*Mr. Kaihau:* Very well, then, let this system of questions continue, but it will end in our going on and on from day to day till the end of the Parliament, and nothing will be done.

*The Chairman:* Mr. Kaihau does not clearly understand the position. What does he want the Committee to do with regard to these petitions—to inquire into the cause that led up to them, or what? To enable the Committee to come to some recommendation to submit to the Government—to act as nearly as possible with the prayer of these petitions—we must take the course we are now taking. Mr. Carroll, will you proceed.

9. *Hon. Mr. Carroll:* Then, I understand you to mean, Mr. Heke, that if this Act becomes law, and certain people do not desire that their lands be brought under the application of the Board, they will be still under the control of the conditions that are contained in the Act, but the administration and management of their own lands will be in their own hands, outside of any control by the Board?—Yes.

10. Well, then, would you be in favour of inserting some such provision in the proposed Act as this: that people who do not wish to bring their land under the control of the Board should make application to the Board to be exempted from control with regard to their own land?—Yes, if as the result of our investigation we ascertained that it would be advisable for them to make such application.

11. What I mean to ask you is this: Supposing that this proposed Act has passed and become law, be it the Maori Council Act, or the Board, or whatever is the tribunal to be constituted, and that Act wipes out and does away with all existing Native-land laws, and takes the place of the land-laws that now exist, then all Native lands whatsoever come under the operation and provisions of that Act—whatever it may be—then all previous existing Acts having been wiped away by this Act—supposing, then, certain persons did not wish to come under such Board, or Maori Council, or whatever tribunal be constituted to administer their land, would you have them ask for that exemption from the Maori Council or Board, or would they take some other means to obtain that exemption—appeal to the Governor in Council, for instance?—What I say is that if all existing Native-land laws are abolished, and the Bill which we are now endeavouring to frame becomes law, the Board should be constituted, and act under the authority of that Act, but it should not be that the Board have the immediate and absolute right to control and administer all or any Native lands unless in the first place the owner or owners submit their lands for the Board to administer and control—it should be optional.

12. Well, we will leave that point. What powers would you propose the Board should have in the administration of Native lands—for instance, will they have power to lease?—Yes, they should have the right to lease, and to control and administer lands placed in their hands; but they should only exercise those powers in the direction suggested by the owners of the land when placing it under the control of the Board.

13. Then, you would advocate giving the Board the authority to survey the lands—to subdivide the lands, to make reserves for the owners who wish such reserves to be made, and to generally control and administer the lands?—If that is the wish of the people when they placed their lands under the operation of the Board, I should say Yes.