

own this territory. We have known many great things, and consider the appointment of this Commission one of the greatest. We are delighted to know that this Commission was appointed to deal with the Whakarewarewa and Ohinemutu Villages only. We feel honoured, and hope that your final deliberations will be of benefit to us; in fact we feel sure that they will be, for you have associated with you members of our own race to express the Maori viewpoint. Welcome, welcome, welcome! I will now give you a brief history of our government by the pakehas since they first took charge. Commissioner Johnson was the first pakeha appointed by the Government to Rotorua. This was about 1886. He instructed us to fence our pas and holdings so that the tourists should not fall into the hot pools. He also urged us to keep our pas clean and to preserve their picturesque appearance. He was succeeded by Mr. Malfroy, who took a great interest in geyser activity, and who complimented us on the picturesqueness of our thatched houses. Captain Turner then assumed control in place of Mr. Malfroy. He did not assist us to any great extent. He, however, also took an interest in our thatched houses. The Maori Councils were introduced for the local government of villages about the year 1900. They made laws as to sanitation, drunkenness, &c., and appointed Marae Committees to enforce their by-laws. The work of the Council was good, but they did not seem to approve of the thatched houses and earthen floors that their pakeha predecessors had advised. Before they could accomplish much, they in turn passed away to make room for the Tourist Department. When the Tourist Department was formed Mr. T. E. Donne was appointed as manager. He was alive to the position, and gained control of the villages at Whakarewarewa and Ohinemutu. A Tourist Office was established at Rotorua, and Mr. L. Birks was the first Government Tourist Agent appointed. The villages came under his control. He gave us plenty of advice. He also did not see the picturesque value of the thatched houses with earthen floors. He ordered us to build new houses. We attempted to comply with his demands. Our means, however, being limited, we could only build the houses that you have seen and photographed. About 1911, Mr. W. Hill succeeded Mr. Birks as the Government Tourist Agent. I cannot say much beyond that he did not seem to have effected any material improvement in the condition of Whakarewarewa.

*Dr. Buck*: Perhaps you did not give him the opportunity.

*Mita Taupopoki* (shaking his head sadly): It has been a matter of regret to me that he did not see eye to eye with us. The control passed into the hands of the Borough Council in 1922. We have no fault to find, except that for four years we have been in the same condition as when Mr. Hill left us, except for wear-and-tear and the depreciation in value of my property through subsidences. However, we are accustomed to the "*Taihoa*" policy of the pakeha. The Borough Council has done us no active harm, which in itself is good. Nothing is better than something which is bad. Now, sir, your Commission has arrived on the scene. I hope it will end our long period of waiting. I hope that there will be something material besides advice. We are ready to support you in what is good, but we will sit down and wait again if it is bad. If the Commission says to us, "Improve your houses," we will wait for a further word, because we have heard that advice before. If the Commission says, "Here is money to enable you to improve your houses and your village," then at last we will have heard what we have been waiting so long to hear. It will be a new word, and we will be able to end the long period of waiting. If money can be advanced to us for a long enough period for us to pay it back, then something will at last be done. This is the solution of the difficulty from our point of view. If the Commission can solve it, then we can give the Commission our whole-hearted support to bring about the object for which it was set up.

*Waaka te Rohu*: Greetings to the Maori members and distinguished visitors! Welcome to the members of the Commission appointed under the authority of the Governor-General! Welcome, welcome! You come from our Prime Minister, Mr. Coates, a man of foresight, and one who has the interest of the Maoris at heart. It is some time since we heard that a Commission to inquire into the conditions within our villages had been appointed. Now that you are here we are pleased to welcome you. You have inspected and seen for yourselves the state of our villages.

*The Chairman*: We are here to listen to your views and any suggestions you may make as to improvements.

*Waaka te Rohu*: That is good. I have nothing further to say.

*The Chairman*: I wish to thank you all for your generous welcome. On behalf of the pakeha members, I wish to thank you. We are all New-Zealand-born, and that being so we take a keen interest in matters of this kind. Therefore we are at one with your own members in sympathy with the objects of this Commission. We hope with our deliberations we can put up something concrete to the Government, something that may be of benefit to you. Any improvements or alterations must necessarily have the sympathy of the dwellers themselves; and therefore as a Commission we would like to have your views as to what should be done to improve your pas. The order of reference will be read, so that you will know the objects of the Commission. [Order of reference read in the Maori language]. I would now like to hear your opinions upon what should be the best method of improving the conditions within your pas.

*Waaka te Rohu*: By the time the paper was read we had forgotten the beginning, the middle, and can remember just a few lines at the end. We shall be pleased if you can let us have a copy, or the paper itself.

*The Chairman*: There is no objection to your seeing it.

*Waaka te Rohu*: Good. We desire also to get from the Commission an expression of opinion as a result of their inspection of the pa, and also the reason why photographs were taken during your inspection.

*Mr. Mitchell*: Surely the dilapidated houses that were photographed will themselves tell you why they were photographed.