

New Zealand Parliamentary Debate

Thursday, Ma

(Hansard, 1991)[<-- Previous](#)[Search the Archi](#)**RUNANGA IWI ACT REPEAL BILL : In Committee**

RUNANGA IWI ACT REPEAL BILL

In Committee

11.13 p.m.

Clause 1. Short Title

Clause 2. Repeal and revocation

Clause 3. Transitional provisions

11.35 p.m.

The Committee divided on the question that clauses 1 to 3 be agreed to.

Ayes 48 Anderson Gresham Muldoon Sowry Armstrong Hancock Munro Storey Banks Hasler Neeson Thomas Birch Kimber Neill Thorne Bradford Kyd Peters, W. Upton Cliffe Laws Reeves Whittaker Cooper Luxton Revell Williamson Creech McCardle Richardson East McCully Robertson, J.S. English MacIntyre Rogers Falloon McLauchlan Ryall Tellers: Fletcher McTigue Smith, L. Carter Grant Meurant Smith, N. Hilt

Noes 22 Austin Gregory Moore Tirikatene-Sullivan Blincoe Hawkins Prebble Wilde Braybrooke Hunt Robertson, H.V.R. Dalziel Kelly Sutherland Tellers: Davies Maharey Swain Hodgson Elder Matthewson Tennet Wetere

Majority for: 26

Clauses agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

RUNANGA IWI ACT REPEAL BILL : In Committee

Third Reading

Hon. WINSTON PETERS (Minister of Maori Affairs): I move, That this Bill be now read a third time. Most of the arguments surrounding this Bill have been recited for quite some time now. Arguments both for and against the Bill were recited at the time that the Runanga Iwi Bill came before the House in the three readings before it became an Act of Parliament. There has been much discussion in recent months about the viability of that legislation. It is, therefore, the Government's wish, and has been for some time---in fact, the National Opposition at the time made a statement to the effect throughout the 1990 election campaign---to repeal the Runanga Iwi Act and to put in its place a policy in which the tribes could voluntarily liaise, work, and co-operate with the Government, but there would be no compulsion about the shape, character, and form of government, so that it could not be alleged---[Interruption.] I tell the member who is

trying to interject that this is a serious matter, and that it is not about a lot of frivolous debate. I am grateful for the offers of support that have come from---

Hon. Fran Wilde: There's no camera tonight, Winston.

Hon. WINSTON PETERS: We can see why the member would never generate any television interest. The member's credibility is about zero. The Runanga Iwi Bill was introduced with very little public support. There was a great deal of confusion in Maoridom about it. The policy that replaces it, with the greatest of respect to the Opposition, is, as Opposition members know, substantially supported by Maoridom. There is about 99 percent support, if my correspondence is anything to go by, for that initiative. It should be given a chance. I recall that when the former Minister of Maori Affairs took office in 1984 I promised him 2 years of silence, and he got 2 years of silence, because that is the Maori way. I am not asking for any such favours, because I have a much easier collection of colleagues to work with. They are much more amenable to reason and to logic. Consequently, if they feel that they want to tackle or scrutinise any Maori measure they should feel free to do so. That offer is made to Opposition members by the Government.

RUNANGA IWI ACT REPEAL BILL : In Committee

Hon. K. T. WETERE (Western Maori): I listened with great interest to the Minister speaking on the third reading of this Bill. While he may have given the Labour Government 2 years of silence, the difference is that I was able to lift the vote from \$67 million to about \$250 million, which is what we are talking about. The Minister will know that only 2 weeks ago the supplementary estimates took away about \$40 million from the Education vote. That had something to do with the sessional grants to kohanga reo. I tell the Minister that in the next week or two the Opposition, like a number of other people, will ask where the Minister was when the estimates were presented to Cabinet, and why the kohanga reo grant was cut to the extent that it was.

While I listened with interest, as I said before, about the direction in which the Minister intended to go with this great policy, the Opposition's concern is whether he will be able to hold that vote together and to do what he has told us tonight. That is the concern. I have listened to Maoridom, as well, and I am still listening, and I am still waiting. The indications from all around this place, and even within it, lead me to believe that there are some matters that need to be tidied up. If the Minister can assure the Opposition that that is incorrect, that is fine.

Hon. Winston Peters: The member has my word on it.

Hon. K. T. WETERE: Is that word like the word the Minister gave the Opposition on the introduction of the Bill, when he said that he would not lose one cent? Can I take it that we still have that word? The vote has been changed in the supplementary estimates.

Hon. Winston Peters: No, it hasn't; it's being negotiated right now.

Hon. K. T. WETERE: Yes, there are some changes, and I simply tell the Minister that some questions will be asked at the proper time. Obviously, some rethinking has been done and that is the reason I am making those assertions, because they are true. I have read the supplementary estimates, as well. It does not add up. If the Minister has the confidence of his colleagues then the Opposition will wait with anticipation and interest to find out where he might be going with the new policy.

Hon. Winston Peters: Its support is overpowering me.

Hon. K. T. WETERE: Is it? How was the construction of the new agency reached in the new policy the Minister is talking about? I think that it was in the second reading---or was it in the estimates in another set of discussions on that matter---that the Minister said that the Ministry of Maori Affairs would continue with its present structure?