

to Waitara. I had previously ascertained the names of the Wellington claimants to the land. I consulted them about it, and made similar arrangements with them to those which I had made with Ropoama, that they should be paid when the block was settled for at Taranaki. I believe that one or two of Ropoama's people were at Waikanae at that time, and he promised to see them on their return, and to endeavour to arrange matters with them with respect to their claims. It has been recently stated that, in addition to these persons who are known and recognised as the actual owners, claimants are to be met with at the South as numerous as a swarm of bees; but I think that those who say so, would find very great difficulty in establishing anything beyond mere assertion of right to the land comprised in the Government purchase. Knowing how scattered the claimants were, and the difficulty of getting them all together in any one place, at any one time, I was a long time pursuing investigations before I myself came to the conclusion that the purchase was quite satisfactory; but the more I enquired into the case, and came into contact with impartial natives residing at a distance, and having no particular interest in the locality, the more I became satisfied that the purchase was a good one. There may be one native at Waitara, not a party to the transaction, who I admit may yet have a claim to a small portion of the block, but he has never asserted it. I cannot tell the exact quantity, it could not be large; indeed, I am not sure that he has not relinquished his claim in the block, if any existed, in exchange for some lands in the vicinity of the purchased block which Teira gave up to him, as the latter owns a considerable quantity of land there. There may have been some such accommodation between them—at any rate Patukakariki has never asserted any proprietary right. Besides ample time having been given, a notice was inserted in the receipt for the first payment to the following effect:—

E mea ana te Kawana, mehemea ka tika te kupu o tetahi tangata e ki ana ia, he pihī whenua tana ki roto i nga rohe kua tuhituhi nei ki tenei pukapuka, kahore ia e pai kia hokona tona pihī, ara, tona taupa, me rohe marire me waiho tana pihī ki a ia.

[*Translation.*]

The Governor says that if any man brings forward a just claim to any portion of the land included within the boundaries written in the Deed, and is not willing that his portion or division should be sold, such portion will be marked off, and he will be allowed to retain it.

By this it will be seen that it has always been left open for parties to come forward and substantiate just claims, but very few who have availed themselves of the opportunity given them, have established any reasonable claim, such as one founded on having occupied the land within the last 50 years. I believe that most of the difficulties and opposition which has been met with in pursuing this purchase have originated entirely with the anti-land-selling-league. This league I first heard of as having commenced at Otaki. The Natives of that place assured me that they had very good advice on the subject, and that they had resolved not to dispose of any more land to the Government. This league kept gaining ground for some years, until a general meeting took place in the Ngatiruanui country, where the Natives pledged themselves not only to sell no more land, but to take the life of any one who should attempt to do so. This meeting took place about 7 years ago. It was also resolved at this meeting of the Natives that they should entirely repossess themselves of lands already alienated by them, and drive the European settlers into the sea. The subsequent murders, involving the deaths of Rawiri, Katatore and others that have taken place at Taranaki, have been the result of that league and the confederacy at Manawapou, and there is very little doubt that the settlement of New Plymouth, since the formation of this land league, has been in a very perilous position. It has been stated that this has arisen in some measure from the defective system of acquiring land which has been in operation, but I feel satisfied that such is not really the case. I can refer to very many circumstances connected with purchases of land in different parts of the country where Native life has been saved and wars and quarrels averted, which might have involved the Europeans. This has been done by purchasing from the conflicting parties the land which was the bone of contention, on terms which they themselves perfectly understood and appreciated. I know it is wished by some to create an impression—and the Venerable gentleman who was examined previously to myself has tried to make it appear that the land purchases at the South have produced dissatisfaction. The purchases to which he probably refers, viz., those at Rangitikei and in the Middle Island, were carefully conducted. I can refer to the whole of the purchases between Otaki and Wanganui as having been acquired from the true and rightful owners. It was perhaps the misfortune of some of the proprietors that they did not belong to the same denomination as the Venerable Archdeacon—and this in a great measure, at least to me it appeared so, formed in his estimation a bar to their claims. Reference has been made to land being at one time bought from the conquerors, and at another from the conquered. These two grave offences in the instances alluded to, happened to be purchases made from Natives of the Wesleyan denomination. I will defy (beyond probably a trifling dispute about boundaries) any person, however high an authority he may be in Native matters, to challenge the validity of these purchases, or the mode in which they were brought to a termination.

I believe I have now stated generally to the Committee what I have to say with reference to the purchase at Waitara.