

773. Was the question in your contemplation at the time when you made the purchase of the Onaero-Urenui Block?—My idea at the time was that all who did sell would forfeit their awards.

774. Was the question discussed between you and the Natives?—It was not.

775. Why did you not raise it with the Natives at that time?—I suppose I must have forgotten it. I have frequently talked to them about it since, and told them that that was my opinion.

776. What have they said about it in those conversations?—Some considered they ought to be allowed to exercise their awards, and others appeared disposed to give them up.

777. Have you formed any opinion yourself from which you can make any suggestions on the subject?—I think the fairest way to arrive at it would be to put a money value upon the awards, and ascertain what sum each received for participating in the cession of the block of land. If the money so received was not equal to the value of the award, I should say they were entitled to consideration. There were two reserves made in the Onaero-Urenui Block; one of 500 acres, and another of 200 acres, for tribal purposes.

778. And they are still to be kept for the tribe?—Yes.

779. Will you explain the position of the Rimutauteka Block?—It is confiscated land. There was a special arrangement made with the Pukerangiora chieftainess Mere Poka, and her husband. It was agreed that the whole of the piece south of the Waitara River should remain until they were disposed of to come to an arrangement for us to take it. The block of land belongs to Pukerangiora, Otaraoa, Ngatirahiri, and Manukorihi. I saw the necessity for making provision for the Manukorihi and Pukerangiora people, and I agreed that I would not interfere with that block, leaving it for the Government to decide finally whether they would give it back to the Natives or not.

780. There is a piece of land, containing 2,000 acres, between the Waitara and the southern boundary of the Ngatirahiri Block, coming down to the Tikorangi military settlement. What is the position of that block?—That is land which has always been promised to be given back to the Otaraoa.

781. At what time was that promise made?—At the time when we surveyed the Tikorangi settlement; and it was always an understanding in the operations which have been carried on. There was a dispute about the Ngatirahiri boundary, one party accusing the other of encroaching upon their rights; but that must be settled amongst themselves. This was all looked upon as land for the Otaraoa.

782. Then ought that piece of land to be added to the Ngatirahiri Block as being abandoned for the Otaraoa people?—I never had authority to abandon it; but it was an understanding with the Otaraoa that they should have it.

783. In what position is the block of land between the Waitara River and the southern boundary of the Onaero-Urenui Block?—That is confiscated land, without any arrangement having been made of any kind.

784. Then is it free for the Government to deal with?—Yes; but Natives will be claiming it.

785. What Natives?—The Ngatimaru Natives and the Ngatirahiri people.

786. Are there many Natives living there?—I am not aware that there are any living there now.

787. Your explanation now carries us up as far as the Urenui River, does it not?—Yes; but there is a reserve called Kaipikere, within the Urenui Military Settlements Block, containing 200 acres, which is reserved tribally for Whakapake and his family; and there is also a small burial-place in section 1 of the Urenui District.

788. Now we will take the land north of the Urenui. There is only one block reserved there for military settlers: is that not so?—Yes; and in that there are the following reserves: In the Pukearuhe Military Settlement, there was a reserve at Waiiti containing 156 acres, and another reserve at the mouth of the Mimi River containing 42 acres. There was also a reserve, consisting of all the belt round the Pukearuhe Township, excepting 10 acres retained for a blockhouse. The reserve is to be allocated to Natives.

789. Under what arrangement is it to be allocated?—By arrangement with the awardees. A portion of the Town Belt was promised to a Ngatitama chief named Wiremu te Puoho, who lives at Whakapuaka.

790. Were there any town sections reserved for Natives in the Pukearuhe township itself?—All the unallotted town sections were given back to me for Native purposes.

791. How many sections?—40, of 1 acre each.

792. What was the arrangement with respect to those; were they to be individualized?—The intended arrangements we were never able to carry out, in consequence of the disturbed state of that district for many years. Many of these sections will have to go to the awardees of the Compensation Court, eight of whom had town sections awarded to them by the Court. Two sections, 47 and 41, in the Pukearuhe District, which were given back to me for the Natives, were afterwards exchanged with a settler named John Elliott for a piece of land adjoining the Waiiti Native Reserve on the coast, and the piece of land so formerly belonging to Mr. Elliott has accordingly been added to the Native reserve there. Mr. Elliott will have to convey that piece to the Crown in order that the title may be made clear; and the Crown grants for the two sections, 47 and 41, will have to be granted to Mr. Elliott instead of to the Natives, in completion of the exchange which was made, as reported by me to the Native Minister on the 19th May, 1873.

793. With regard to the compensation awards between Waipingao and Titoki, there were 8 town sections and 3,450 rural acres awarded to the loyal Natives. In the second section, from Titoki to Urenui, there were 6,450 acres awarded to the loyal Natives. In what state are these awards at the present time?—The awards are in the condition in which they were when they were issued by the Court. There has been no allocation. There is a great deal of country at the back of the military settlements, between Pukearuhe and Urenui, for the allocation of these awards.

794. Was not the land between Mimi and Urenui claimed before us at Waitara?—The question of a promise made to the returned Chatham Islanders was brought before the Commission at Waitara. They had been promised a block of land abutting on the Urenui River, and another block abutting on the Mimi River. When this promise was made, I was appointed to arrange with the Natives and decide as to what the quantity should be. No quantity was ever stated.