

It appears to me that this letter refers to the Upper Owhaoko or Ngararoro Block. If so, I would suggest a rehearing be granted.—S. LOCKE, 18/9/78.

I submit that these minutes dispose of any allegation that the Natives had had a full opportunity of being heard in the Native Land Court when the block was adjudicated upon. Judge Rogan admits that he knew nothing of the service of the notices; and Mr. Locke recommends a rehearing, not stating whether the notices had been served or not. The Native Minister, Mr. Sheehan, then requested that the position of the land should be defined, as there seemed to be some doubt about the locality of the block; and on the 26th March, 1879, the tracings were furnished, and Mr. Sheehan minutes the papers on the same date,—

LET rehearing go.

The Order in Council for rehearing was prepared two days later; but a clerk of the Native Land Office seems to have imagined that the rehearing had not been applied for within twelve months of the adjudication. I presume he dated the adjudication back to the 2nd December, 1876; and, if it were so dated, no doubt he would have been correct. On this appearing, the Native Minister minutes,—

STAY further action at present.

His minute is dated the 2nd April, 1879.

The next that happens is a letter from a Native called Na Hika, dated from Ruiopeanga, Patea, appealing that the Court should investigate their claims to the lands. This letter seems to have gone the rounds of the Native Office, and Mr. Sheehan asks the Under-Secretary to ask the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court whether there could not be a rehearing, as the Court held at Napier adjourned *sine die*; and the Chief Judge states,—

I CANNOT see where the doubt is. The order was made by the Court on the 31st October, 1877, and the application on the 31st January, 1878; judgment published on the 7th December, 1877. Everything seems regular.—F. D. FENTON, 3/11/79.

There is on these papers a valuable memorandum from Captain Mair, dated “Wanganui, 13th August, 1879:”—

MR. BOOTH.—Owhaoko is a valuable block partly in the Hawke's Bay and partly in the Bay of Plenty Districts. The Taupo Natives had a good claim to this land, but they state that, owing to the *Gazette* notices of sitting of Land Court, at Napier, on the 2nd December, 1876, not reaching them in time, the land was awarded to Renata Kawepo, and he has since made over 28,601 acres of it for a school reserve. They state that they applied for a rehearing, and their application was approved; that they attended a sitting of the Court at Napier in 1877, but Ngatikahungunu would not allow the Courts to proceed.

In August, 1877, Heperi Pikirangi, Paurini Karamu, Hika, and others made application in open Court to Judge Rogan at Taupo in this matter, when he informed them that their application had lapsed. I believe Hika and his friends have a real grievance.

Wanganui, 13/8/79.

GILBERT MAIR.

On the 16th October, 1879, Judge Fenton wrote asking about the rehearing:—

HON. NATIVE MINISTER, Wellington.—I have the honour to call your attention to an application made to your office by Topia Turoa and others, recorded as No. 78/1675, asking for a rehearing of the claim to the block of land named in the margin, which application was referred to me, and returned to your office on the 25th September, 1878, with my recommendation that the request should be granted. No further action appears to have been taken in this matter.—F. D. FENTON, Auckland, 16/10/79.

In consequence of the change of Ministry in 1879 nothing seems to have been done until the beginning of 1880, when the matter came before the Hon. Mr. Bryce, who was then Native Minister; and he advised His Excellency in Council to grant a rehearing of the block of land called Owhaoko; and accordingly, on the 4th February,