

TUESDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 1891.

Court opened at 9 a.m.

Remainder of lists submitted and read out.

John Arnett spoke about a portion of the Aparima Reserve—viz.: the unallotted sections—and pointed out that the matter was in an unsatisfactory position, inasmuch as the land was lying unproductive. Charles Goodwillie was supposed to manage it, but he never gave any account of what was done in the matter. The residents of Riverton wanted to obtain one of the sections for a recreation-ground, and the persons interested in the land were disposed to sanction the proposal if they could make an advantageous exchange. With reference to the acre set apart for a landing reserve, it was unanimously agreed that it should be allotted to Meri Wehikore.

A list of the successors to deceased owners in the Aparima Reserve to be obtained for the information of the Riverton people, to enable trustees to be elected for the management of the vacant land.

Commission adjourned to Oraka.

ORAKA, WEDNESDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY, 1891.

Court opened at Oraka (Colac Bay).

A large number of Natives and half-castes from Riverton, Oraka, and Kawhakuputaputa were present.

Commission read out.

Natives, &c., requested to ask questions relative to the object of the work and the scope of the inquiry.

Reihana Maire stated that he had been appointed by the people of Oraka and Kawhakuputaputa to act as spokesman for them, and was authorised to seek information from the Commissioner on certain points that the people desired to be enlightened on—namely: (1.) Whether the Commissioner was authorised to inquire into the sale of the blocks alluded to in the report of the Select Committee? (2.) Whether the Commissioner was authorised to redress the grievances that the people were suffering from? (3.) Whether the Commissioner was authorised to observe and fulfil the promises formerly made to the Natives at the sale of the Murihiku Block? (4.) Whether the Commissioner was authorised to restore to the Natives all the privileges they formerly enjoyed as regards fishing, &c.? (5.) What mode was to be adopted in regard to the claims of individuals in the different blocks? (6.) In what part of the Middle Island were hospitals erected for the Natives, that the Committee alluded to as being available? (7.) What is proposed to be done in regard to persons who succeeded to the interests of deceased Natives in 1887, in cases where these persons were unprovided with land before? (8.) What is the reason why the Government have ceased to pay medical officers for the Natives in the South Island? (9.) Does the principle of tenths apply to all the blocks sold to the Government? (10.) Where is it intended to set apart land for the Natives of Ngaitahu and Ngatimamoe? (11.) What action is proposed to be taken in regard to people who were living at Ruapuke at the date of the Murihiku purchase and were not provided with land? (12.) What action would be taken in regard to people residing on the Otakou Block when it was sold to the New Zealand Company, who did not receive any land? (13.) What would be done about the people living at Stewart Island in 1853 who were not provided with land? (14.) Also those who were absent whale-fishing, &c.? (15.) What would be done in regard to persons who had claims in all the blocks?

The Commissioner, in reply to the several questions, stated as regards Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 that no authority was conferred on him to go into these matters. As regards No. 5, that this was another point on which no instructions had been given. In answer to No. 6, the Commissioner stated that he assumed that the Committee meant the European hospitals situated in the different towns in the South Island. In reply to No. 8, it was stated that it was not known that the services of medical officers had been discontinued. As regards No. 9, the Commissioner stated that the principle of tenths did not apply to all the blocks. In answer to No. 10, it was stated that it was impossible to say at present where land would be selected. In reply to Nos. 11, 12, and 13, the Commissioner stated that, although no authority was conferred under the Commission to go into matters of this kind as regards people living at Ruapuke and Stewart Island, lists could be prepared of the names of persons residing at these places in 1853 who had not received land, to enable the matter to be fully represented to the Government in a separate report. Same reply as regards No. 14. In answer to No. 15, the Commissioner stated that as far as he was aware it was not intended to recognise more than one claim, the intention being merely to provide a sufficiency of land, and each person so provided would receive the allotment in the neighbourhood of the locality in which he then resided, irrespective of his claims to other blocks through his ancestors, as this class of claim was not recognised. The proposed increase of land was being made by the Government not so much as a matter of right but as a matter of goodwill, especially as regards the Murihiku Block, there being no stipulation in the deed of sale that additional land would be allotted.

The Commissioner pointed out that the main object of the present inquiry was to obtain a correct list of the people now living at the several settlements, and to effectuate this it was desirable that a Committee be chosen to prepare lists of all the residents.

Reihana Maire applied for an adjournment, to enable the lists to be prepared. The Commissioner stated it would be preferable, after the Committee was formed, for it to remain in the room and prepare the lists there; but, as they seemed bent on going elsewhere, the application would be granted. Lists subsequently submitted and read out.

Ratimira te Au complained that Kaitahi Paihi was causing trouble on the Titi Island called South Cape, and requested the Commissioner to investigate the matter. He proposed that Reihana Maire should be appointed in lieu of Kaitahi Paihi.