

the owners never received any money or scrip, but I cannot speak with any certainty except as regards our own blocks.

88. Are there any other blocks in respect of which you want the Government to give you relief?—They are mentioned in the petition.

89. What is it the petitioners want? Is it that the Government should look into this matter and see if anything can be done to get back these lands for you and the other Native owners?—We wish the Government to see and consider these matters; to see if we cannot be paid honestly for our land, or to get some portion of it back.

90. *Mr. Carroll.*] You hope that the Government will give you some relief?—Yes. The proceedings in the Supreme Court failed for want of money to carry on.

91. *Mr. Kapa.*] How many times did you sign away land to Mr. Rees and Wi Pere?—Three times.

THURSDAY, 30TH JULY, 1891.

RANIERA TUROA in attendance and examined.

92. *The Chairman.*] There are two other petitions besides that of Hemi Waaka—namely, those of H. E. Johnson and Henry Green. We are taking these three petitions together. You are aware that Hemi Waaka gave evidence yesterday?—I do not see why I should give evidence as regards Hemi Waaka's petition. I came to give evidence about a separate block altogether—that is, about the Kaiparo Block. This was the first land that we handed over to Mr. Rees. It was in 1878, in March or April of that year, that Mr. Rees and Wi Pere called a Native meeting at Wairangahika, and asked us to give them this land (the Kaiparo Block) to take care of for fear that if it were left in the hands of the Natives they would sell or mortgage it, and the Native owners would suffer in consequence. Mr. Rees informed us that the mortgage which Mr. Reed had over the block was, in effect, illegal (rotten), because of the food, flour, spirits which had been advanced to the Natives.

93. *Mr. Carroll.*] The land was under mortgage at the time?—Yes; it was mortgaged to Mr. Reed. I should like to explain something that took place before this meeting. I will therefore make a short explanation. In 1876 I took exception to my wife having mortgaged this land; I disapproved of that, so I took possession of it, fenced it, and Captain Reed was unable to oppose me occupying the land. That was the position of affairs when this meeting called by Mr. Rees took place at Wairangahika. At that meeting Mr. Rees explained what steps ought to be taken with regard to this block. He told us that if the land were handed over to himself and Wi Pere they would put it to good use—that they would subdivide, sell, and lease different portions of it for the benefit of the Native owners. He told us that if this proposal were carried the money would flow into our pockets like water running out of a bucket. This statement made us consent to handing over the land (literally, “the words entered into our hearts, and made us think they were very good”), and a document was prepared and signed by the Natives handing over the land to Mr. Rees and Wi Pere. Subsequently they handed over the land to the company. Afterwards Mr. Rees suggested that a committee should be appointed to assist him and Wi Pere in administering the land. I was one of the committee selected. After the committee was selected Mr. Rees invited us to go to his office at Gisborne. He advised us to set apart a portion of this block for the purpose of leasing, so that we would be able to get money to carry on as regards the rest of the block. We agreed to set apart 60 acres for that purpose. This was done. (It was leased.) At the same time Mr. Rees told us that this Kaiparo Block should be given as security for the moneys that were to be raised to administer the other blocks, the property of the company. He proposed that a mortgage should be raised on the Kaiparo Block to build a bridge from the township of Gisborne across the river to the Whataupoko Block. I think the amount of money proposed to be raised by the mortgage of the Kaiparo Block was £3,000; but I am not quite sure. He said that after the bridge should be built, the Whataupoko Block should be cut up into sections and disposed of by auction; that this would recoup us for the money raised on Kaiparo Block (out of the proceeds of the sale). We, the committee, agreed to these proposals. The bridge was built, the Whataupoko land was disposed of, and occupied by Europeans. In 1883 the committee became apprehensive as to our position; we believed, or began to see, that we had injured ourselves. We then went to Mr. Rees's office in Gisborne, and asked him to give us accounts showing the amount of money raised on the Kaiparo Block. We wished to find out how much of the money had been expended in carrying on his office—that is, in payment of salaries and that sort of thing. We wished to get a statement of accounts, so that when we ascertained the amount due we could let a portion of the Kaiparo to pay this liability. He did not give us accounts; he gave us no statement at all.

94. Do you say that Mr. Rees had the management of the company then, or had it passed into other hands?—Mr. Rees was still managing.

95. *Hon. Mr. Mitchelson.*] That was in 1883?—But afterwards the management passed into other hands; at all events, we looked to Mr. Rees; he was the one we spoke to; he was our friend.

96. *Mr. Carroll.*] The one you were intimate with.

97. *The Chairman.*] He was the person you looked to. That is very much the same?—In 1886 Wi Pere and a Native named Te Peka Kerekere asked us to lease them a portion of the Kaiparo Block for three years. The committee agreed to that. That was the time when Mr. De Latour was managing for the company. Wi Pere asked for 100 acres to be leased to him. He got it. The lease ran for the time fixed, but we never obtained any money for either of these leases. We received no money from the first lease of 60 acres, nor from the second lease, although we were told we were to get an income from these leases. In the year 1888 a statement of liability was given showing the position of each block, this one included. We, the owners, then found that this land had been disposed of (killed).