

*Mrs. Hopere:* I am confining myself only to persons who were born before 1867. I consider those persons have rightful claims. Now, Puanga te Whatu, No. 7 on List 7A, has a claim.

*The Commissioner:* You must remember that this list is adjourned, so we cannot go into it now. With regard to Nos. 2, Te Mokopurangi; 3, Hine Eruini; 4, Paora Hopere; and 8, Awhipera Nepe, I should like to hear what the representative of the Crown, or any other person, has to say about them.

*Mrs. Hopere:* I want full shares for these people, and I do not want any person born after 1867 to be taken into consideration. I am now speaking on behalf of those four persons you have just mentioned. I think that those who come before you should say whether each claimant they represent was born before 1867, or was entitled to succeed others who were born before 1867.

*Mrs. Brown:* Mr. Commissioner, I wish to throw some light upon the statement of Mrs. Hopere with regard to the words in my petition about those who were absentees. I think the petition should be produced, as the words were distinctly stated "absentees who were rejected by the Compensation Court."

*The Commissioner:* These are the words: "The consequence being that a great many of the Ngatimutungas returned from the Chatham Islands to join those who were here to prefer their claims before the Compensation Court. When their claims had been rejected by that Court they petitioned Parliament, and the result was a promise of 3,000 acres made by the Government of that day to these Natives and other absentees of the Ngatimutunga Hapu."

*Mrs. Brown:* You heard me say all along that I raised objections to Mrs. Hopere's list—first, that the pedigree had not been given and her ancestors might have married into other tribes, which would thus have extinguished her direct descent from Ngatimutunga; and I also objected because the names in the lists which she brought before the Commission are none of them Ngatimutunga, but Otaraua. Now, Otaraua were never known to travel with Ngatimutunga, and there is a woman who is sitting here—Amiria Reneta—who can testify to my statement. All the food-supplies were sent to that woman's husband and his brother Heremaia. The Ngatitama and the Ngatimutunga and the Kekerewai always travelled together, and the Ngatitama and the Kekerewai were associated with the Ngatimutunga and were always identified with them, although they were separate hapus. If Mrs. Hopere brought her claim before the Native Land Court, who would believe her? I and my claimants come direct from Ngatimutunga; I have raised these objections because awards were made for the Otaraua in the Otaraua Block. The Ngatitama Block is also defined, and there is no Ngatimutunga in that block. The Kekerewai were in the same position. I think we should make a limit and confine ourselves to those who petitioned. The expense of this business has all come out of my own pocket, for the especial benefit of the Ngatimutunga people.

*Mrs. Hopere:* Mrs. Brown's petition is very clear as to its concerning the absentees of the Ngatimutunga; these people did not live in the neighbourhood of Taranaki, but have been away for a long time. In the report of the Commissioners it is stated that the Commissioner came here to try and ascertain who these people were, and was not able to find out anything about them; but in 1890 the Clifton County Council, seeing that the land was unoccupied, requested the Government to sell it as Crown lands. Mr. Kensington said that this 3,000 acres was set aside for absentees and for those who were put out by the Court, and Mrs. Brown acknowledges that this is so.

*The Commissioner:* I listened to what you had to say, and took down the names of five persons whose claims you said ought to be reconsidered. Now, Mrs. Brown, having got up this petition, no doubt thinks that she is to a certain extent responsible, and has a right to speak on the claims of those included in other lists than her own. She says that the persons who were rejected by the Court petitioned Parliament, the outcome of which was the setting-aside of the 3,000 acres in question. If the right of your claimants is upheld you have a right to obtain 16 acres for each of them, and I have stated that I am quite willing to consider the case of four out of the five persons you mentioned.

*Mrs. Brown:* Will the Commissioner allow me to explain one point with regard to this matter? You observe that the land was not awarded until 1884. At that time many of the Natives were away, and there was no notice given that the block was set aside, and it was not until long afterwards that we discovered this. It was only four or five years after we discovered that the reserve was set aside that the Government took possession of it and sold it again. So I contend that no sooner was it allocated than it was sold by the County Council. I think this is sufficient reply to Mrs. Hopere's statement that we took no action in the matter.

*Mrs. Hopere:* Will you then reconsider these four names?

*The Commissioner:* Yes, I have said so. There seems to be a very large sack, but very little bread in it. We must now put a stop to this *korero* and get on with the examination.

A document was put in with regard to the Ngatitama Block, and the Commissioner remarked that he had nothing to do with it, as he was only dealing with the Ngatimutunga case.

*The Commissioner:* I will now take Te Tipi's list.

Te Tipi was then sworn.

*Te Tipi:* Before submitting my list I would like to mention that Mrs. Hopere said that the claimants should be confined to those born before 1867, but as the award was made in 1884, I think you should consider those born before 1884. Mr. Fox said he accepted all the children born before 1884, and they got a full share in the block.

*The Commissioner:* Can you point that out in the report?

*Te Tipi:* It is to be found mentioned with regard to our reserves.

*The Commissioner:* The reserves were made out of confiscated lands, and were for persons residing here. This is an act of grace, which gives 16 acres to each of you. The Court threw out your case. Makama Shearer (No. 1 on List 8) is included in the West Coast Reserve at Mimi and Kaipakopako. He is therefore disallowed. Mere (No. 2 on List 8) is at Wellington, and