

of 1904. The Court of Appeal was held at Hastings on the 23rd and 24th June, 1905, but these grievances were not well looked into by that Court.

Your petitioners also forwarded the genealogy mentioned in the schedule hereto for the enlightenment of that Court to our relationship to those who were included as owners to the block of land in question, but all were in vain, for the Court in its award of the 24th June, 1905, did not consider us.

Wherefore, as you are well informed of your petitioners' grievance, your petitioners will humbly pray that a rehearing by a competent Court should be instituted to reinvestigate the title to this land according to Maori customs, and thus your petitioners will ever pray.

HARE RAKENA TE AWEAWE
ENIA HENI TE AWEAWE
HEENI TE RANGIOTU
MANAWAROA

HEMANA TE WHETU
TAMIHANA TE AWEAWE
EMA TE AWEAWE.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 2ND AUGUST, 1905.

C. B. MORISON, Solicitor, Wellington, examined. (No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you just give your evidence in regard to these petitions? You might take the two together, as both are on the same subject?—I may say that I was in no way concerned with the litigation in the case of Nireaha Tamaki against Baker. I had nothing to do with that action at all. I did appear in a formal matter, instructed by Messrs. Hankins and Loughnan, of Palmerston North, on a question which arose after the passing of the Act providing for the discontinuance of the action. That is some years ago. I had nothing further to do with the case at all, and was not interested in the case, directly or indirectly, until Mr. Moffatt, who is an interpreter and land and commission agent at Palmerston North, came to Wellington in February last and asked me if I could act for Erini te Aweawe, Rewanui, and his mother, who was Rewanui's sister and also the daughter of Erini, at an inquiry directed to be held by the statute. I had an engagement in New Plymouth at the time, and had some difficulty in arranging to go to Woodville, but he said it was a matter of importance to the parties, and I went. I saw Moffatt in Wellington, and he gave me instructions as to what I had to do in the matter, and as to the nature of these people's claims. That was, I think, some four or five days before I went to Palmerston North. The case was adjourned until Tuesday, I believe, the 28th February. I have no papers with me, because I left all papers with Mr. Moffatt after the case. I left Wellington on the Monday and arrived at Palmerston the same night, taking the first train to Woodville on the Tuesday morning. Up to this time I had not seen Rewanui Apatari or Mrs. Moffatt at all. They were at Woodville. I went up by arrangement with Mr. Moffatt. Mr. Moffatt called at my office yesterday, and stated that he had in his possession written authority for me to act on behalf of these Natives, and I did act for them. I did not trouble about getting a written authority from the Natives, but he had taken care to get it. The Court opened on the Tuesday, and there were about half a dozen parties with professed claims to this money, and it occurred to me—and indeed to the others—that as there had been an enormous amount of legal expense incurred in this matter it would be much better if the parties could come to an understanding, because it was quite obvious that if the claimants were to fight the matter at length the proceedings would take weeks. The result was that Mr. Fraser, who was representing Nireaha Tamaki (a prominent claimant), and I and the others met and went through the various accounts that had been sent to the Natives, and analysed them as far as it was possible to do so. We then arrived at some basis of arrangement. We got adjournment after adjournment of the Court for the purpose of really getting at the bottom of the position, and we had a little difficulty with one or two of the outside claimants, who, so far as I could judge, were coming there "on spec." They had not taken any part in the litigation apparently, but they did represent interests under the names of the original owners of the Kaihinu Block, of which this was admitted to be a part. We therefore concluded that the best thing would be, if possible, to come to an understanding with all of the Natives, and see if we could get an adjustment of the various interests, recognising, of course, only the real claims and not the speculative claims. During this time Rewanui Apatari, Mrs. Moffatt, and Erini te Aweawe were in constant communication with me. I took no steps without communicating with them through Mr. Moffatt, who was perfectly well acquainted with all that was going on, because, as far as English is concerned, he is a pakeha, and, I believe, a perfectly reputable and upright man. He communicated everything to them, and discussed with them a dozen times various matters as they arose during the time we were in Woodville, and I may say that, although I felt there were difficulties at the commencement of the case as to the extent of the claim which my clients preferred, I succeeded, by the arrangement I made for Rewanui, her sister, and her mother, in getting better terms than I had anticipated. I think they were entitled to all they got, but there were difficulties in the way, and it seemed to me that the arrangement made was one that was highly satisfactory to them. No doubt the Committee will have brought before it the terms of the actual agreement that was drawn up. In addition to what appears in the agreement, I made certain arrangements with Mr. Baldwin, who had acted for these Natives in the action *Nireaha Tamaki v. Baker*, who was then at Woodville, with regard to certain claims made against Rewanui. One was a claim for £80, made by Mr. John Thompson, of Wellington. I arranged with Mr.