

my elders that they had petitioned to have this land investigated. I cannot doubt what has been said, that the island belongs to the Maoris, and we cannot understand who has possession of the island. I would respectfully ask the Commissioner whether the island was bought or not. We want some documentary evidence to show that the Government bought this island. If the Government can show the documents, then we ask for an opportunity of contradicting. We only ask that, if the Government claim it as their right, we should be allowed some compensation, and I think our demand of £300 is only a fair one.

RUSSELL, 17TH MAY, 1907.

*Puketotara Block.*

*Hone Rameka* (sworn) states: I will give evidence. This land was sold by Kerei Mangonui and others to Kemp. At that time our elders were living on this land. Mr. Kemp did not go on to the land to show the boundaries, the boundaries of Puketotara and other blocks adjoining. It was afterward that we heard that Kerei Mangonui had extended the boundaries of Puketotara. Then there was a dispute between Mr. Kemp and Kerei Mangonui. Mr. Kemp said that if there was anything to be given back he would return it, and Mr. Kemp went with Wi Hau and others and located the boundaries of the land that was to be returned. It was then that Mr. Fairburn was asked to make a survey. On the survey being complete an application was sent to the Native Land Court, and Judge Maning investigated the matter. I will not say whether it was at Haruru or Waimate. There was some trouble then because of the land overlapping Shepherd's land. Again we applied to the Native Land Court. Judge Munro heard the case at Ohaeawai. The same dispute cropped up—that is, the overlapping. Subsequently an application to the Native Land Court was heard at Waimate, but when Mr. Puckey was about to give his decision a wire came from Auckland saying that the land belonged to the Government. We then subscribed some money to send Hone Peti to Wellington. When the land was returned by Mr. Kemp his son leased the gum rights, and subsequently they were leased by Mr. John Black, of Kerikeri. It was only when the Government cut the land into sections that our elders ceased to live on the land. We have a number of fruit-trees growing there. If the Commissioner will allow it, we wish to put in a letter from Mr. Kemp.

*Kapowai Block.*

*Kerema Hori* (sworn) states: It is about Kapowai I would speak. Ever since I had breath this land has been known to be ours. The land spoken of by the previous witness [see below] was sold to Cook. During the lifetime of my father I heard that this land belonged to us, and it was only after his death we found that the Government had taken it. Our permanent buildings and our cultivations were on this land, and our sacred spots. The most sacred spots were on this land. We petitioned the Government because we do not know of any sale of this land to any person. Our elders, the first petitioners, are dead, and we come here to give this evidence in support of their petition. I do not think I have anything else to say. I only repeat that our sacred spots are there, and that we are living adjacent.

*Henare Keepa* (sworn) states: This land is at Waikare. We do not understand how the land was taken. This land is still owned by us, and is still unadjudicated. We did not survey it, but I think that there are about 3,000 acres. It was during the lifetime of our elders that certain portions of this land were sold, and we know what portions were sold. The first piece sold was to Mr. Cook. The piece was sold for the price of a ship. The next piece was sold to Mr. Greenaway. I was present at both sales. Mr. Greenaway gave one cask of tobacco and two double-barrelled guns. The name of his land was Ohua. The name of Cook's portion was Pahiko. There was another portion sold (8 acres) to "Benehawea" [sic]. We the survivors do not know of any other portions of this land sold to any one. During my lifetime we gave 800 acres to the Stephensons through Judge Maning, and there was no objection made by the Government to this gift of ours to our people. There was a sale to the Government by us of Opa (the land we gave to the Stephensons was called Manukau). After that Taikapukapu was sold to J. Cook without any objection by the Government. I say that this land should not be possessed by the Government without any compensation to us.

*Opua.*

*Riri Maihi Kawiti* (sworn) states: I have only a few words to say. About thirty years ago the Government took possession of this land. According to what I heard, the land that was given to the Church Mission was bounded from Te Awahapa to Paihia. The land on this side was occupied by some of us at Tuakainga—that is, by Wiki te Ohu, who is one of our people, and by Toheriri, also of us. The place I speak of is close to the sea-shore and was used by our people when they were on fishing expeditions. There is another place, called Maraetae, a living-place of ours; also a place which is called Waipuna, near the Opua Wharf, along the railway-line. There is a place called Ongarumai, an important place where our people lived—they lived there long—after the gift had been made of the other portion. I can only speak approximately, but it was about ten years after the fight at Ruapekapeka. We say the line started at Te Awahapa, thence to Ongarumai. Our only doubt is whether the Government or the mission people took this land, because when the gift was made to the mission my grandfather, Kawiti, was at Kaipara. When he returned he made an objection to the people who gave the land. His objection was "that the boundary should have been at Te Awahapa." He said then that he would not object to the boundary being at Te Awahapa, but he would not allow them to extend it further. It is by this we