

200. Would this land which has been bought by Morrin Brothers be available for settlement?—Yes.

201. And the land which the Government bought is inferior?—Very little of it is good. A little of that part adjoining Morrin's might be made good, but the whole of the other part is not worth anything. I do not suppose the Government have been able to get this part, Ngatimaru's piece opposite Kerepehi [points to map], because the Maoris will not sell it. Mr. Mackay tried to survey it, and the Maoris pulled up all the pegs.

202. Why did the Natives then prefer this Drummond Hay's Block (Mr. Whitaker's old land claim) to the Puninga Block?—There are no Natives residing on the Puninga Block. One or two of them used to come over and cultivate a small piece near Mr. Mackay's farm. You know how Natives like to keep together. They do not like to be isolated. If they are getting the part of the land next to Morrin's, they are getting the best of Drummond Hay's Block.

203. The Natives getting this Maukoro and Mr. Whitaker getting Puninga, would take all the valuable land out of the block?—Yes.

204. Have you heard of Mr. Whitaker's buying out all the claim to the other piece of land?—The restriction being removed, everybody who has got means will be able to buy it.

205. There will be no difficulty in getting this Puninga end also, buying out the obstruction of the Natives to his own original claim?—I believe he could do it.

206. *Mr. Stevens.*] Supposing this piece of land was affected by the claim of Mr. Whitaker, would not that have to be respected?—Of course the Natives would very likely respect that, but that would not deter them from dealing with it.

207. Would they have had to have respected Whitaker's claim to 14,000 acres in Drummond Hay's block?—Very likely. Supposing a certain number of Natives owned this [points to map], and a certain number of Natives owned that [points to map], supposing the Government were to go in and buy this block of land, the Natives would say to Government they would like to have some reserves. I believe there would be no difficulty in buying this, quite independently of Mr. Whitaker's claim.

208. Do you know whether the Natives were anxious to have Mr. Whitaker's claim to 14,000 acres on Drummond Hay's Block removed?—Yes, I heard them say the sale of the land was done in such a way that not all the Natives were parties to it, and there was more land being disposed of than they thought was right.

209. Are you or are you not aware whether the Natives interested in Drummond Hay's Block wished Mr. Whitaker's claim to be transferred from that block to Te Puninga?—I have heard that some of the Natives who owned land here [points to map], and have disposed of it here [points to map], are now desirous of getting land given to them here in exchange for land there [points to map].

210. I want to know whether you know or do not know that the chief Tarapipipi wished and still wishes this claim of Mr. Whitaker's to be transferred to the Puninga?—No, I have not heard that Tarapipipi did wish that.

211. Have you heard that it was the wish of the Natives?—I have heard it was the wish of the Natives, but I consider these proposals more likely to come from Europeans than Natives.

212. Are you in a position to say whether you know there have been any proposals either from Natives or Europeans about this exchange, not as a matter of likelihood, but as a matter of fact?—No, I do not know it, because I have been away from that district twelve months. I have been back once during that time.

213. *Mr. Swanson.*] This piece that Mr. Whitaker had a title to was known as Webster's claim?—It is difficult to say whose claim. Some say it is Captain Beadon's claim. He states he bought land from the Natives here thirty-six years ago, and made Mr. Whitaker his attorney.

214. There was a Native burying-ground and settlement upon this land?—Yes.

215. Is it true or not true that the Natives would not sell this Te Puninga Block unless they got that block of Whitaker's back?—It is not at all unlikely, because it is their settlement, and you know how Natives stick to their settlements. For all that, I consider that if any one wished to buy this Puninga Block there would have been no difficulty in buying, because they have been selling right and left lately.

216. You do not think they would insist on the exchange?—It looks to me too much like a European proposal.

217. *Sir G. Grey.*] How many Natives are there at the Native settlement you speak of?—Not very many now. They come backwards and forwards. They live there sometimes, and up in the King country at others. They are a very restless lot of people.

218. How many do you think there are?—Eighty or ninety, taking them altogether.

219. You were not at the Thames when this purchase was made?—No. I know pretty well how Native lands have been acquired in the Thames District as a whole.

220. *The Chairman.*] Would it not have been possible to have satisfied Mr. Whitaker's claim, and at the same time have left a sufficient margin to provide for the wants of the Natives?—Yes. They wanted 700 acres. The Natives were saying they would not complete this purchase unless they had this reserve of 700 acres where Tarapipipi lives, and where their ancestors are buried. They said to me then that the sale of this land was not completed.

221. *Mr. Stevens.*] Do you think it would have been unnecessary, for the purpose of satisfying this claim, to obtain the concurrence of the Natives to have that claim transferred to Puninga or anywhere else?—Quite unnecessary, I think.

222. Do you know anything of the transaction?—I have no direct knowledge; only what I have heard from the Natives themselves.

223. *The Chairman.*] I believe these are turbulent Natives?—They are very dissipated Natives, and altogether neither Queenites nor exactly Kingites. They lean both ways, whichever they think more suitable at the time. For that reason they have been restless, and selling their land without thinking very much what they are doing.