

795. And that still remains to be decided?—Yes. I received the following letter at the time:—

“Native Secretary’s Office, 21st December, 1867.

“I have the honor to inform you that a number of Maoris, as per margin (men, 42; women, 44; children, 36: total, 122), have unexpectedly arrived from the Chatham Islands on their way to Taranaki, having determined to settle there. It is feared that this action thus suddenly taken by them may prove embarrassing at the present time, and it is much to be regretted that the efforts of the Government to prevent their taking this course should have been unavailing. The Government, however, do not feel justified in preventing their proceeding there. I am to request you to make the best arrangement you are able for locating them on the land set apart for them in common with other absentees.

“W. ROLLESTON.”

I also received the following instructions from the Native Minister: “Wellington, 12th November, 1868. In reply to your letter of 28th October, on the subject of the unexpected return of Chatham Island Natives to Taranaki, I have, by direction of Mr. Richmond, to state that the Government will be prepared to carry out any arrangement you may make for settling Pamariki and his people.”

796. What was the number of the returned Chatham Islanders at the time when the promise to which you have referred was made?—About 200.

797. How far does the bush go down near the coast, along the country between the Urenui River and the end of the confiscated line at the White Cliffs?—On an average about one mile and a half.

798. How far back from the sea-shore would you say that the land was fairly available for the satisfaction of the unexercised awards, and of the Chatham Islanders’ claims?—At the back of Pukearuru township the land is very broken. Further south, in the direction of Mimi, there is some very fine land indeed, not touched.

799. Taking the Native Land Act scale of 50 acres per soul for the Chatham Islanders, it would take about 10,000 acres to fulfil the arrangement with them?—Yes; supposing their number to have been 200.

800. And, adding that to the 9,900 acres which are included in the unexercised compensation awards, there would be nearly 20,000 acres to be provided north of the Urenui?—I should say quite that.

801. Do you think there is enough fairly good land to enable the Government to meet that liability?—I could not state positively the quantity of good land; but I have been up towards the Mimi Valley, and there is very good land there indeed. I should think there was a sufficient quantity of land; but I cannot be positive. The country must be good, because it is proposed to take the railway to Waikato through it.

802. Is that proposal the result of personal examination?—Yes, partly.

803. With regard to the compensation awards for 3,450 acres between Urenui and Rau-o-te-huia, do you think there is sufficient land between the Ngatirahiri boundary and the Onaero River to fulfil those awards?—I never had any intention of allocating the awards of the Court on that particular block, because it was land which was required for Natives returning to their allegiance. The awards must be exercised in the Urenui-Onaero Block, which was ceded to the Crown: reserving the question which was raised before, namely, whether the whole of these awardees might both claim their awards and participate in the cession of the land.

804. The awards of 1,485 acres between Titirangi and Waitara were surrendered to the Government, were they not?—Yes; in consideration of the individualization of the whole block, of which I have just produced the evidence.

805. Is there not an award of 2,000 acres to the Pukerangiora tribe, which, according to the memorandum we wish to be prepared for the Commission, has not been allocated at all?—That should have been allocated in the Rimutauteka Block, and will have to be allocated there whenever the matter is settled.

806. Subsequently to the sitting of the Compensation Court, there were awards made by the Government to the absentees who were excluded by the Court at its sitting in 1866 at New Plymouth: will you describe what was done?—The Government proceeded on the following grounds: In all the purchases of land in the Taranaki District, the ownership of absentees had been recognized by the Crown, and they had participated in the purchase-money. The rule therefore of the Compensation Court of 1866, which excluded people who were not actual occupiers in 1840, seemed an arbitrary one: and Mr. Richmond determined, in that view of the question, to make a grant of 16 acres each to the absentees, on the same scale as had been fixed by the Compensation Court at its sitting at Wanganui, so far as the numbers of the absentees could be ascertained from their relatives resident in the district.

807. What was the amount of Mr. Richmond’s awards?—The awards were made to five principal tribes: To the Ngatitama, from Parininihi to Titoki, 1,300 acres; to the Ngatimutunga, from Titoki to Rau-o-te-huia, 3,000 acres; to the Ngatiawa, from Titirangi to Onatiki, 2,700 acres; to the Puketapu, from Onatiki to Waitaha, 2,100 acres; and to the Taranaki people, from Okurukuru to Omuturangi, 3,100 acres. The total was 12,200 acres. In addition, 200 acres were to be granted to the chief Te Puni, 100 acres to Wi Tako, 100 acres to Mohi Ngaponga, and 100 acres to Hemi Parai, in recognition of services. This made altogether 12,700 acres.

808. Was there any official notification given of these awards?—Yes, in the *Kahiti* (Maori Gazette) of 14th August, 1867.

809. We understand that within the boundary of the confiscated land, from Parininihi up to the inland point, and then following down to the boundaries of the Onaero-Urenui Block, the Waitara-Taramouku Block, the Pukemahoe Block, and the Te Wero Block, there were no purchases made, nor any *takoha* paid by you?—There have been no operations at all in that district, and it all remains as originally under the confiscation.

810. Will you now state the blocks bought by you south of the Onaero-Urenui Block?—There is the Waitara-Taramouku Block of 12,469 acres; the Pukemahoe Block of 1,000 acres; the Kopua Block of 3,140 acres; the Ruapekapeka Block of 400 acres; the Te Wero Block of 6,270 acres; the Huiroa Block