

1181. What did Mr. Worgan do?—He began by defining the position of the awards: taking (so far as the areas were concerned) the three blocks I have mentioned, which aggregated 9,864 acres, and placing the remaining 7,400 acres in the Lower Waitotara Block, near the sea. A reference to the map I have produced will show at a glance the position of the awards.

1182. How did Mr. Worgan come to buy up any of the awards?—He was authorized by the Government to purchase the interests of the awardees where they were willing to sell the same; and here began all the difficulties which have since occurred in relation to these lands. Mr. Worgan did not confine himself to purchasing for the Government, he negotiated purchases for private individuals; and, in allocating the awards, instead of following strictly the previous arrangements of Mr. Atkinson, the Crown Agent, he appears in some instances to have been guided in his individual allotment of the sections by the willingness or otherwise of the awardee to sell his interest. The consequence was that some of the awardees were placed on land to which they had no claim by former associations, which caused dissatisfaction amongst the tribes, as well as amongst the awardees claiming such spots.

1183. When did Mr. Worgan go out of office?—He was relieved of office early in 1873; and I was then instructed to complete the unfinished purchases, and to wind up the whole matter in the best way possible. As the awardees were in many cases willing to sell, the difficulties of improper allocation were in most cases got over by buying the interest of the Native in the award, wherever it might be.

1184. Did no difficulties arise?—In the case of Rahera te Waia it was found imperative to shift Mr. Worgan's allocation. This woman had been unwilling to sell her interest. She was of some mark in the tribe, and claimed section 387, the site of her old *kaiinga*, which had been allotted to Horopapera Pukeke, who was a stranger to the locality, but had sold his interest through Mr. Worgan to a settler. Rahera and the Waitotara Natives represented the injustice of this to Judge Smith, and it then seemed that, unless her claim could be settled, the whole allocation would be in danger of non-confirmation by the Court. After consulting with Mr. Booth, I decided to give Rahera section 387, and to shift Horopapera's award to section 380, which had been previously allotted to Rahera. Horopapera's interest has since then passed into the hands of the Government under "The Riddell Land Grant Act, 1875."

1185. When did the final sitting of the Compensation Court take place?—On the 18th March, 1874, and following days, before Judge Smith. I appeared as Crown Agent, and brought forward evidence on behalf of the Crown relative to the quantity of land in the awards, putting in at the same time a plan showing their position. The Natives interested were also heard.

1186. What did the Court decide?—On the 19th March Judge Smith stated that all the claims for awards had been heard, and that, as there were no objections made which could be entertained by the Court, the final orders would be granted. He added that the Court would sit again on the following day to hear any further matters relating to the awards. Accordingly, on the 20th March, the Judge stated that the Court was satisfied with the awards handed in by me as Crown Agent, and that no objections had been made which could be entertained.

1187. What, then, is the present position of these reserves?—I produce a tabular statement of them in the order adopted by the Compensation Court, setting against each section its present district number, its area, and mode of disposal by each awardee. [See *Appendix*.]

1188. Will you summarize the information contained in the statement now produced?—I proceed, in the first instance, to divide the awards under two heads: 1st. Awards purchased by the Government for which no Crown grants are to issue; and 2nd. Awards for which Crown grants will have to be prepared in the names of the awardees: this includes all private purchases.

1189. How many are in the first division?—There were purchased by Government 20 awards of 400 acres, 1 award of 120 acres, and 57 awards of 16 acres each; making a total of 9,032 acres.

1190. What was done with the land so purchased?—The 9,032 acres in which the Native title was extinguished by purchase, were disposed of as follows: 3,790 acres were returned to the Ngarauru Natives at Waitotara in the shape of reserves; 4,382 acres have been sold or otherwise disposed of; and the balance of 860 acres is still available.

1191. How many awards are included in your second division, for which Crown grants have yet to issue?—There are still to be Crown-granted 15 awards of 400 acres each, 4 of 120 acres each, 5 of 280 acres each, and 23 of 16 acres each; amounting together to 8,248 acres.

1192. That will take in all the awards?—Yes; 9,032 acres and 8,248 acres make up the total of 17,280 acres.

1193. What is the present state of the awards in the second division?—All the awards have passed into the hands of Europeans, either by sale or lease, with the exception only of 23 awards of 16 acres each, and of section 387, awarded, as I have already explained, to Rahera te Waia. I believe that most of these 23 awards have also passed into the hands of Europeans, but I have had no means of tracing these smaller transactions.

1194. Practically, then, are we to assume it as nearly correct that these awards of 17,280 acres have, as a whole, passed out of the hands of the Natives?—Yes; and the Crown grants are only required in order to perfect the titles of the European purchasers who have acquired their interests.

1195. But were the awards saleable instruments?—On that subject I may say I am instructed that the Judge of the Compensation Court has decided that an "inalienation clause" is to be inserted in each Crown grant; and the late Native Minister (Hon. Mr. Sheehan) concurred in this view, giving as a reason that a revision of all the transactions between the buyer and seller might thereby be made by the Crown. How far such a course is now fairly practicable, is a question which, in justice to the buyers who purchased in good faith, should be carefully considered.

1196. But is it not just the question whether all the transactions were really made in good faith?—Many allegations are made by the awardees relating to the purchase of their interests by Mr. Worgan, for the Crown or otherwise; and, if the proposed revision is entered upon, it is hard to say when or where the inquiry will end. I very much doubt whether any useful result is at all likely to be attained by such a course. If it is necessary to go into those questions at all, they must be the subject of a patient and prolonged investigation.