

Court that this was not necessary—that and could act for themselves over this land, and, that being so, Paora did get this by fraud. As the matter stands now there is the verdict of the Court in Mr. Sutton's favour, and, I understand, by this time, at least, his title is unimpeachable under the Land Transfer system. The only thing I should like to have brought out, is in the findings with reference to Rewi Haukoro's interest in the matter.

117 *Mr. Sutton.* At the time of the trial was there any suggestion on the part of either side that what took place at the time the land passed through the Court could have any affect upon me at all?—Nothing transpired at the trial of the case which would have given the Court to understand that Mr. Sutton was present at the Native Land Court, or was concerned at the time the land went through the Court.

Mr. SUTTON, M.H.R., examined.

118. *The Chairman.*] What were the names of the Natives upon the original Crown grant?—Paoro Torotoro and Rewi Haukoro.

119. These were the names of the persons you bought the land from?—These were the names of the persons I dealt with.

120. Have you read the names on this petition?—I have.

121. Is either of those two names upon it?—No; four of those names have never claimed any interest in the land, directly or indirectly.

122. There are seven names on the petition? Six out of the seven have never claimed any interest, direct or indirect, in the matter. I had not previously noticed the two other signatures.

123. Out of the seven, which is it that has claimed an interest?—Hohaia te Hoate. He is one of the Natives who has resided on the land, but he has no right to it.

124. Did any of the other six live on it?—Of the other six, none of them have ever lived upon it.

125. When did this one man go to live on the land?—I cannot say; he has been living there some time.

126. You have heard all the evidence that has been given, including all the documents put in, or at least quoted from, by Ministers?—Yes.

127. After hearing that, have you any statement to make?—I do not know that I have seen all the documents. I have heard all that have been referred to.

128. After hearing the evidence that has been given, have you any statement to make to the Committee?—I can scarcely understand whether the petition is against me or against the Government. I do not consider in any way my piece of land at Omaranui is open to adjudication.

129. That will be for the Committee to consider. Have you any statement to make?—I was present during the whole of the inquiry in the session of 1879 on my petition. I heard the whole of the evidence, and have read the whole of the documents produced, and I know of no evidence that was given to the Committee, or documents, that would lay a foundation for this portion of the Committee's report: "but that it seems probable the issue of the Crown grant did a wrong to the Natives, who for a long time inhabited the 163 acres included in the grant." When this case was before the Committee first, I, as the petitioner, asked simply that the orders of the Supreme Court should be carried out. I had obtained judgment in the Court at considerable cost to myself, as well as a great deal of annoyance, and the Court had issued instructions to the Sheriff to take possession and hand the land over to me. I had reason to believe at the time, and that is completely established by the evidence which has been given the Committee on this occasion, that there was a power behind the Supreme Court which prevented this order being carried out. I did not anticipate, nor did I intend, on my petitioning in 1879, to accept any compromise. I had the right to think that, having fought my action in the Supreme Court, I was entitled to the judgment of that Court, and I have adhered to that point. Some time last year the two Ministers, Mr. Bryce and Mr. Rolleston, came to Napier, as I understood, principally for the purpose of arranging this matter. Previous to their arrival I had informed them I expected the order of the Court to be carried out. A meeting took place, which Mr. Bryce has very correctly described in his evidence on this matter. I was present at that meeting. The Natives present, after negotiation with the Minister, offered a block of land over which they had an interest, but in which neither of the grantees of Omaranui were concerned, and only one of the persons living on the land was concerned in this land. The land was 1,000 acres, a portion of a block of 8,000 acres, which was let for £100 a year on a lease with seventeen years to run, and with a valuation for improvements on the land. The majority of the grantees of that block were not only not interested, but were at absolute enmity with the hapu interested in Omaranui, and had never been consulted by their co-grantees in that arrangement; so that I consider that offer was never before the Government in any tangible form. Shortly after the meeting was over Mr. Bryce had a conversation with me, which was the first he had had with me on the subject. This was in March, 1880. Mr. Bryce offered or suggested that he would offer—I am not certain that he made any definite offer—that Government were prepared to pay £10 an acre—£1,630. I said I was not aware I had offered it to the Government; that I was not prepared to take £1,630 from any one for it, and that I would not take it from the Government. Mr. Bryce asked me to think the matter over and let him know in the morning. I wrote to him early next morning and said that I had further considered it, and that my first impressions were only intensified, and that with the objection—first, as regards the principle; and, secondly, as regards the amount of the settlement, I should have nothing to do with it. I said it was a question on which no Government money should be expended; that the Supreme Court had decided no harm had been done to the Natives, and the Natives were as much entitled to submit to the orders of the Court as any one else. There was a good deal of correspondence after that between the Government and myself. I was asked whether I could make any other suggestion, or something of that sort. I said, "I have always told the Natives I will take land anywhere. I had no objection to the biggest hilltops in the country, always provided it was of the same value as Omaranui. In conversation with some of the Natives—I forget now who, but I fancy it was Tareha—they asked me "Could you suggest any other land that might be exchanged?" I said I would inquire, and would take a few days to look into the matter and let them know. Upon examination of the records, I came upon a block called the