

SESS. II., 1887.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF), ON PETITION OF NGARANGI KATITIA, OF PATEA, AND 26 OTHERS, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Report brought up 1st December, 1887, and ordered to be printed.

No. 138.—Petition of NGARANGI KATITIA, of Patea, and 26 others.

PETITIONERS complain of the way their leasehold land is dealt with by the Government, and pray that the Act may be so amended that they may receive their rents direct from the leaseholder, and that they may occupy the land as soon as the leases run out.

I am directed to report that, as the Government are introducing a Bill this session dealing with this matter, the Committee recommends the petition be referred to them for consideration.

WILLIAM KELLY,
Chairman.

1st December, 1887.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER, 1887. (Mr. W. KELLY, Chairman.)

NGARANGI KATITIA (TE OTI POROTENE) examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] Where do you live?—I live at Patea, and represent the petitioners.

2. You can make a statement to the Committee in respect to the prayer of your petition.—The lands referred to in the petition were leased by us many years ago to Europeans, and we collected the rents from the Europeans in possession. Since the passing of the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act the power of collecting the rents has been taken over by the Public Trustee. When Mr. Ballance visited the West Coast we objected to this arrangement. We considered that we should be allowed still to collect the rents ourselves. Mr. Reynolds has been appointed a Commissioner to collect these rents. A charge of 2s. in the pound was made for collecting these rents. This was a charge by way of commission. We objected to this, saying that the Government had arbitrarily taken over the administration of our lands, and therefore they should not make a charge. Mr. Ballance promised to consider the matter. He did consider it, and the result was that the commission was reduced to 1s. 6d. in the pound. The lease provided for the payment of the rent within a period of eight days from the due date; that is, payment should not be delayed for more than eight days after the date fixed in the lease. But now the money is kept back for two, or three, or four months beyond the proper time. I have handed the lease to the Committee. It provides that the rent should be paid in August. I wish to point out to the Committee that the money due in August has not been paid yet. It is now four months overdue. These are the reasons why the petitioners ask to be allowed to collect their rents themselves. We paid all the charges in the first place connected with these lands and also the survey. I do not think it is necessary to make any further explanation, because the petition is quite clear.

3. This rent is now collected by the Public Trustee?—Yes.

4. What rent does he collect half-yearly? I see it here stated: First half-year, £94; then it increases; the next amount is £122 5s., and the next is £159 17s. 6d. But let me first ask you how many acres are there in this particular block?—The original block contained 376 acres. The Government have since taken a portion of it for a school and for road purposes, and part of it was given to a Native (Taurua), amounting to 73 acres; so that there is now left but 303 acres, and the amount of rent is reduced in proportion.

5. Who gave that land to that Native?—That was an arrangement made by Sir William Fox and Mr. Parris after the lease was made.

6. At the time this land was leased had the Natives a Crown grant?—There had been no Crown grant issued when this land was leased. The lease was in existence long before the Crown grant was issued.

7. Are all the names which I see here in the Crown grant?—Yes. I beg to hand you a list of the names in the Crown grant.

8. Then you hold 303 acres under the old lease?—Yes.