

instead of the eastward spring. I stated in my representations to the Government that Mr. Skeet upset the minds of the Natives about the eastern boundary. My reason was that whenever Mr. Skeet or Mr. Humphries came to Mokau they never spoke to me, but only to the Natives, and there was always trouble with the Natives when they came, and after they had gone I always heard a disturbance among the Natives about this boundary. The officers in charge of the Survey Department, New Plymouth, knew that I was interested in the land. I have repeatedly had interviews with Mr. Humphries on the subject of the survey, at any rate. I have repeatedly represented that the attempt to cut the line from the westward spring would cause difficulties and unnecessary expense. Mr. Humphries told me he did not know me at all in the matter. And this I claim to have been one of the causes of the trouble. Had it been left between me and the Natives to settle, I believe the line could have been run without any trouble. The line has now been run by the Survey Department very nearly in accordance with what I have always claimed and maintained, and in accordance with the order of the Court.

With reference to the evidence given by Mr. Dalziel, I believe it is a fact that they started to take their bearings on the north side of the river. The Natives did object, supposing that some claim was being made to land on that side of the river; but I do not think there was any serious objection made after they started to survey the proper line. With regard to the statement of Mr. Dalziel that the Natives were absent at the time the line was run, and that there might have been trouble if they had been there, I wish to say that there is a Native settlement about five miles away, at Rua Ngarahu, where there were a lot of Natives interested in the land living at the time of the survey. I was informed that they were there by some Natives who came down the river. I made it my business to find it out. Had there been any serious objection these Natives would have been immediately on the ground. I wish also to say that Otorohanga is only about a day's ride from Totoro, and the Natives residing there could easily have been brought back had there been any desire to obstruct the survey. With regard to the line known as Skinner's line, I believe the reason it was run, which was before the block passed through the Court, was that the idea then was to get that portion passed through the Court as a commencement. I do not know with what object the line known as Dalziel's line was run. The only line that concerns my interests since the land passed through the Court is the one which was run by the Survey Department in February last: that is the line which agrees substantially with my original plan, and is the line which would have satisfied me all along. In the several applications which have been made by Wetere and other Natives acting in my interests to the Native Land Court, the want of survey has been the principal difficulty with which we have been met.

With regard to the question as to whether the line now run could have been run in 1882 at the time when I first employed Mr. Tole, I rely upon the inquiries made by Chief Judge Fenton at the sitting of the Court when he satisfied himself that there was no objection to the survey. That was after he passed the land, but before he made the order for the survey. He inquired particularly of Rewi and Te Rerenga whether there would be any difficulty about the survey. Tawhana was also present, and a chief from Wanganui called Piaka, who was also interested in land in that neighbourhood. They all agreed that there would be no trouble. I further put in an agreement [Exhibit No. 39], signed by several of the Mokau Natives, to allow a survey. I have never had an opportunity of getting a survey made on my own account, as the Government have always refused to allow it up to 1885. The survey was absolutely stopped, as I understood, by order of Mr. Bryce; which fact was admitted by him before the Public Petitions Committee. Throughout the whole of this business, until recently, Te Rerenga has been friendly to me, and tried to assist me in my endeavours to get the lease completed.

Heremia was the best friend I had amongst the Natives at Mokau. It is true that at one time he interfered with the working of the coal and threw it into the river; he told me afterwards that he had been prompted by George Stockman to do it, and that he was misled in doing it. He showed me a letter that George Stockman wrote to him, advising him to do it; I knew his handwriting, but could not read the letter, as it was in Maori. I am sure that Heremia would not have opposed the survey being made if he had been left alone by the Government surveyors and by other people. If the survey had been left to me and the Natives it would have been done. I was not present at the Court at Otorohanga when the line known as Mair's line was fixed. The effect of the order of the Court made on that occasion was to throw by far the largest part of the Mokau-Mohakatino No. 1 Block into the Rohepotae Block, and to bring a great number of additional owners—I do not know how many, but I think about three thousand—into the ownership. This is one of the things that has tended to unsettle the minds of the Natives, and to hinder me in my negotiations. When the matter was before Judge Wilson in 1887, at New Plymouth, this action of the Native Land Court at Otorohanga had an effect upon his proceedings. He said, although the action appeared to be illegal, still it prevented him from proceeding until it had been settled. Wetere is alleged to have been one of the parties to this arrangement. He told me that he did not hear the discussion which is said to have taken place on it, and that he never agreed to it. Te Aria, another of the alleged parties to the agreement, was dead at the time—that is, if he is the same person as Heremia, who is also called Te Aria. I have heard the reports of Mr. Humphries read over [Exhibits Nos. 14, 15, and 16]. I wish to observe, in reference to those reports, that every Native that Jones is connected with is spoken of as a person of no position amongst the Natives, but that every Native Mr. Humphries consulted is said to be a person of position and influence. As a matter of fact, Epiha and his family are the largest landholders in the block. The tone of these reports bears out the statement I make, that the Survey Department has been creating all the difficulties with regard to my lease. You will observe that Mr. Humphries visits the district, and does not see or speak to me at all. With respect to Mr. Skeet, it is a fact that after he came into the neighbourhood the difficulties became insurmountable; he was always falling out with the Natives, not only in relation to this survey, but other matters. I object also to the report speaking of the absurdity of the line drawn by order of the Court; that is not the business of the surveyor. I spoke to Mr. McKerrow