

ERATUHA, of Stoney River, in attendance and examined.

1801. *Mr. Sinclair.*] Where do you come from?—From Hangatahua.
 1802. Where is that?—At Okato.
 1803. Near Stoney River?—Yes.
 1804. What hapu do you belong to?—Ngamahanga.
 1805. Are you one of the persons who signed this petition?—Yes.
 1806. Did a number of your people also sign it?—Yes.
 1807. Was it your and their wish that they should sign it, or were they put up to it by some Europeans?—No; we did it ourselves.
 1808. Are the grievances they there complain of their own grievances, or have they been started by Europeans?—It was on account of the management of these reserves that we signed the petition.
 1809. Will you answer that question a little more definitely?—It is on account of the privations we have suffered owing to the management of these reserves by Mr. Mackay, the Reserves Commissioner.
 1810. Did you or the people authorise Mr. Mackay to lease any land?—No.
 1811. Do you know whether any of your people did so?—It was Mr. Mackay that induced us to lease some lands; but the whole of the tribe did not do so.
 1812. What grants are you in?—Herekino.
 1813. Is that the only one?—Yes.
 1814. Do you know how much of that land is leased?—The whole of it was leased; there was only one block that was not leased.
 1815. What was the first intimation you had that the block was leased?—I heard it from those who first subdivided the block.
 1816. Did your people consent to the leasing?—No.
 1817. Where were they living at the time it was leased?—About two miles from the portion that was leased.
 1818. Were there few or many of them living there?—A good many of us; the whole tribe.
 1819. Have these people got enough land for occupation now?—Yes; we have sufficient from the lands that were left over after the land leased by Mackay.
 1820. There were lands left over?—Yes; it is one size.
 1821. Is it sufficient to give you food for your hapu?—It is sufficient for some of us; for others it is not sufficient.
 1822. Then you have no complaint on that score?—No; the only privation we suffer is from Mackay's administration.
 1823. Will you give us an idea how many of your people consented to Mr. Mackay's leasing?—Only seven of us.
 1824. How many are there in the hapu?—About a hundred.
 1825. Are they all in the grant?—No.
 1826. How many do you think are in the grant?—I could not tell you just now.
 1827. Are you in the grant?—Yes.
 1828. Were these seven who consented to lease principal men in the hapu or not?—Some were, some were not.
 1829. How many of them were chiefs and how many were not?—Four were chiefs and three were not.
 1830. Did Mackay come to consult them about the leasing?—No.
 1831. Where did he come to?—To Hangatahua.
 1832. Did they go to meet him?—Only these seven went that I have spoken of.
 1833. Why did not the rest go?—Because they did not approve of it.
 1834. Did Te Whiti tell them not to go?—No.
 1835. Had they anything to do with Te Whiti?—No.
 1836. Were they told that if they did not lease the land it would be leased whether they liked it or not?—We heard of that and we disapproved of it.
 1837. Was that why you did not go to meet Mackay?—Yes.
 1838. Who told you this?—Our own tribe told it.
 1839. But who told your own tribe?—It was the parties who leased the land that told us.
 1840. These seven persons?—Yes.
 1841. Did they consent of their own accord, or was it, in point of fact, in consequence of their consent that the people consented?—Some of the seven agreed to lease, some did not agree to it.
 1842. Did the four chiefs you speak of consent?—Two of them agreed to it and two objected.
 1843. Give us the names of the two who objected?—Hoani Wharekawa was one, Komene was another. Mackay urged upon them to lease the land: in consequence, the land was let.
 1844. Have you ever heard that since these lands were leased the rents have been reduced?—Yes.
 1845. How long ago did you hear this?—Mr. Rennell told us at Waorongomai.
 1846. Did they tell the Natives why they were reducing the rent?—They told them that were the land was bad they would reduce the rent for five years.
 1847. Did the Natives consent to this?—No; they did not agree to it.
 1848. Is this the grievance you have against the Public Trustee?—Yes.
 1849. Did your people ever hear that there was any authority given to the Trustee to reduce these rents?—I do not know by what authority they reduced the rent: we were only told that it would be reduced.
 1850. Are there any of your people without sufficient land in consequence of the action of Mr. Mackay, the Reserves Trustee, in leasing this land?—Yes, there are several.