

1970. *Mr. Rennell.*] But he is in prison?—Yes, it is true he has been in prison.

1971. And has never been on the land?—He was on the land before he was sent to gaol, but his sister remained in possession of the land. He left her on it.

1972. How could you expect me to give these absentees land equal in amount to the rights of the Natives residing on the land?—It is one of our customs that, notwithstanding a person may go away from the land, if his fires of occupation are kept alive all his claims remain, and he maintains his right not to suffer in the least.

1973. Are you not aware that all these rights were swept away by confiscation—that in consequence of confiscation of the land not one of these rights remained?—I believe that our customs are still in force over this land. As a proof of this, the land has been awarded to those who originally owned it, and not to outsiders.

1974. Do you not know that this land was to be granted for the use and occupation of resident Natives?—Yes, I believe that is so. All my relatives were living permanently on the land from before the fighting until the time this recommendation was made.

1975. Were Tuki and Ngururu living in the district at the time it was made?—They occupied land at times, but they did not cultivate it like my people. Tuki was taken prisoner to Waikato, grew up there, and only came back when an old man.

1976. Are you of opinion that the people who have resided there all their lives are entitled to no bigger share than absentees?—I do not know of any absentees.

1977. You say that Tuki got 80 acres: who told you?—Ngururu told me.

1978. Have you never seen this list?—No; I have not seen the list.

1979. Do you know that I sent one to Ngururu?—I never saw it.

1980. As the principal man, was not he the right person to send the list to?—It would be right to send the list to Ngahina.

1981. *Mr. Bell.*] You told us that you heard that Rennell and Tuki were together when the list was being made for the distribution of the rents?—Yes; I heard that they met and subdivided the land.

1982. Did you hear that at the time?—I know that Tuki was the only one of our people who was with Mr. Rennell at that time.

1983. But did you hear it at the time?—I heard it after the subdivision had been made by Mr. Rennell and Tuki.

1984. Where was Rennell with Tuki. What is the name of the place?—Taiporohenui.

1985. Did you know that Mr. Rennell was at Taiporohenui at the time?—I did not know.

1986. Did you not know that he was coming there?—I did not.

1987. Was there a meeting of your hapu to discuss what should be done when he came?—I never heard of any meeting for that purpose.

1988. Were you present at any meeting?—We had very many meetings of our hapu, but they did not relate to Rennell in any way.

1989. Did you not have a meeting to decide what you were to do when Rennell was going into the subdivision?—I do not know anything about it.

1990. Did you know that there were letters for you at the post-office?—I did not; I saw no letters at the post-office. There were letters from Rennell to Ngahine Tokau the younger, but there were none for me.

1991. Were there letters for your brother?—There were none for my brother; if there had been I would have seen them.

1992. Did you not—you and your people together—resolve that they would not take the letters that came to the post-office?—No, we came to no such determination.

1993. Do you know Mr. Williams?—I do not know that European.

1994. *Mr. Sinclair.*] With reference to Kahui, was he a proper person to be an Assessor in this matter?—He is not a proper person; he is a tricky person, a treacherous person.

1995. You mean an underhand person?—Yes.

1996. *Mr. Rennell.*] Is that the opinion the hapu have of him?—Yes.

*Mr. Rennell:* I deny it: I deny that he was an improper person to be Assessor, or that he was incapable because out of the district; but that certainly was not the opinion which the Hon. Mr. Ballance had formed of Kahui. When Mr. Ballance appointed him Assessor he had a very high opinion of him indeed.

Mr. WIREMU KINGI KAPONGA examined.

1997. *Mr. Sinclair.*] Where do you live?—At Matarikoriko.

1998. Is that north of Waitara?—It is on the south side of Waitara.

1999. What is your hapu?—Ngatirahiri.

2000. In what block are you interested?—I am interested in the Waihi.

2001. Where is Waihi situated? is it at the north side of the Waitara River?—Yes, it is at the north side of the Waitara River.

2002. Is it a large or a small reserve?—It is a large block.

2003. Is there any of it let?—That is the land which the Government leased to Europeans.

2004. Do you know about what year it was leased?—I am not clear about the year it was subdivided and leased.

2005. Were you consulted by the Public Trustee or the Reserves Trustee before it was leased as to whether it should be leased?—Mr. Mackay and Sir William Fox went to the district.

2006. Did they ask the Natives for their consent to lease the land?—No.

2007. Did they consult the Natives as to what land should be leased?—At the time of their visit the land had not been subdivided. The Maoris were not consulted as to what portions should be leased or what portions retained.

2008. Did Mr. Mackay ever tell them he intended to let a certain portion?—Sir William Fox said the land was to be subdivided. Mr. Rennell then took the management.