

Te Aro: Salutations to the Commissioners! I have seen Captain McDonald who on Saturday came down from the Committee meeting up the river, and he told me that one resolution the Committee had passed while he was there was that they should be allowed to lease their lands.

Takerengi Mete Kingi: I have merely to repeat my expression of gratification at the Commissioners' arrival here, and to state that we are very satisfied to find that they consent to receive the report of the Committee when it has been drawn up. There are many matters that we would wish to speak about, but we do not wish any division to take place in our deliberations.

Mr. Carroll: The same arrangement has been made with the Ngatikahungunu. They are having a meeting, and will send the result to the Commissioners.

Kahukaka te Kupenga: Will the Commissioners take into consideration matters affecting the West Coast reserves?

Mr. Mackay: We cannot take into consideration anything connected with those leases. These are all practically *sub judice* in the Supreme Court. Have you any interest in those reserves?—Yes.

Are you a joint owner with another?—Yes.

In what reserve?—Ihupukatete, Waitotara.

WAIPAWA, 5TH MAY, 1891.

By arrangement, the Commissioners (Messrs. W. L. Rees, M.H.R. (Chairman), J. Carroll, M.H.R., and Mackay) met a large gathering of Natives of the Ngatikahungunu Tribe in the Odd-fellows' Hall, at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. Rees: The Commissioners have come to meet the Natives here, and are pleased to see so many of the leaders of the people gathered together. As Mr. Carroll is the representative in Parliament for this Native electorate, and is also a member of the Commission, he will address the Natives who are present, and will tell them the objects of the Commission, leaving the matter then open for them to discuss.

Mr. Carroll: In the last session of the Parliament great confusion was seen to exist in regard to the Native-land laws. It was seen that for many years past Parliament had been passing laws in regard to Native-land matters. And it was seen that out of these laws only confusion and trouble have arisen, and that this confusion and trouble have affected injuriously both the Natives and the Europeans. It was perceived that the lamentations of the Maoris were continually ascending to the Houses of Parliament. It was recognised that the operation of the Native-land laws was not good, and that the working of the Native Land Court was not giving satisfaction. It was then determined, in order to get rid of these difficulties, that fresh legislation should take place. With the view of carrying out that idea, this Commission was appointed to traverse the whole Island, investigating this Native-land question, meeting the Natives face to face, and ascertaining from them their views on the question, and eliciting from them their opinions as to the particular points in the various laws that pressed most severely upon them. It was the desire of Parliament that if the Natives complained of defects in the laws they should have the opportunity of pointing out where those defects were. It was also considered desirable to have their opinion whether amendments should be made in the laws or whether there should be a complete change in the laws. Parliament also requested the Commission to ascertain from the Natives in different parts of the country what changes, in their opinion, should take place with regard to the administering of their lands, and with regard to the selling and leasing of their lands; and likewise to ascertain their opinions with regard to the operation of the Native Land Court—whether or not it was burdensome to them. These are the matters that were submitted to the Commission for investigation. Its object is to enable the Natives to make known their wants, so that it may not be said hereafter that the laws which are to be made were made upon the responsibility of Parliament itself, and without any reference to the Natives. That is a general explanation of the business of the Commission.

Henare Matua: I wish to express my congratulations to the people who are called Commissioners. May you be long preserved. We are, all of us who are assembled here, very glad indeed to have been asked to state our opinions upon the subjects embraced in the inquiry that is now being held. Many of the grievances that the Natives suffer from have arisen out of land-sales. The difficulties and the grievances of which we complain in connection with sales arise out of lands that have been reserved—lands that were set apart as reserves, but from which the Maoris have not derived the advantage. The grievances in connection with these reserved lands are of long standing, and if it is necessary we can specify the names of the blocks. Ruataniwha, extending to the summit of Ruahine, is one of them. The disposal of that land is not understood by the Natives who really have a claim to it. They were ignorant of the transaction. It was not included in the sale of Waipukurau, but after Waipukurau had been sold it was found by the owners to be included. Pourere is the name of another block. That is land that was reserved at the time of the Waipukurau sale, and the person who is occupying that land at the present time says it belongs to him—that it is not a reserve. Yet the people know that that land was not sold to the Government. The European who occupies that land, however, persists in saying that it belongs to him, and the Natives claim the land, notwithstanding. Manukaroa is the name of another block that was reserved at the time of the Porangahau sale. It was set apart as a reserve for the Natives. Two people sold that land, and those for whom the reserve was made were not parties to the disposal of this land. Makahua is the name of another block. That land was set apart as a reserve for the benefit of the Natives, and yet a Native mortgaged it, and the mortgage was foreclosed upon. I wish to say something further that I omitted with regard to the Waipukurau sale: According to the conditions of that sale there were 100 acres reserved near the northern portion of the township. That land was reserved for the whole tribe, and it was not passed through the Court. It was sold, however,