

office, and I went with him. The Surveyor-General, Mr. Percy Smith, stated that he knew those three blocks, and that they would answer for settlement—that he would like very much that the Government should buy the Kaitaia Block. I left the Surveyor-General's office, and, Mr. Cadman remaining with the Surveyor-General, I returned to the Native Office; and Mr. Cadman joined me there in a few minutes. He told me that he would buy those three blocks if he got them for a reasonable price. He then asked me what I thought he could get them for. He said that Mr. Smith had put 5s. per acre on the Otatau Block. I told him it was not enough—that I had ten years previously paid 6s. an acre, and all expense of surveys and Land Court. He said Mr. Percy Smith would put no more value on it. The next block, Motukaraka, he asked me what I thought the Natives would want for that. I told him I thought it could be got for 12s. 6d. an acre; it was worth £1. He said that Mr. Percy Smith had only valued it at 8s., and the Resident Magistrate at Hokianga, Mr. Bishop, valued it at from 8s. to 10s. an acre. I replied that Bishop was no judge, and it was shameful for Mr. Smith to put such a small value upon it, as the land was in a good situation, and was good. He said that was all the Surveyor-General would give. I said I had put a lot of special settlers there; that some of the settlers had from 12 acres and upwards each, and they were entitled to 50. I would try and buy it for their sake to enlarge their holdings. He then asked what I could get Kaitaia Block for. I replied, what had Mr. Smith valued it at. He said 7s. 6d. an acre. I said that was plenty; that I could get it for less money. Well, he said, if I liked these prices he would get the thing put into shape and buy it. I asked him what he would allow towards the expenses. He said he would allow £10 for the Otatau Block, I think £35 for the Motukaraka Block, and £50 for Kaitaia, on condition that there would be no surveys or cutting off owners' shares that would not sell. I told him it was not half enough, as the expenses would be a good deal. I put my finger on the Kaitaia Block on the plan, and said I can get some money out of this; have you any objection to me getting some money out of the Natives for selling it? He said he had no objection—that the Natives might give me what they liked, so long as the Government were not put to any more expense. I pointed out to the Minister that the block was divided into two parts, but that I was speaking from memory. He said that if they did not sell it in one block, he would not allow anything for expenses. I said they were all chiefs, and friends of my own, and that I had no doubt I could get that done. We then had a conversation with regard to payment for the land, and he said that Mr. Bishop, R.M., would be the medium of payment. I said he was a very good man, but he was only there once every two months, and that the owners of the different blocks could not be got together when Mr. Bishop was there—that Mr. Bishop had to attend the Courts from Otahuhu to Ahipara, covering a distance of 180 miles. He asked me if I could suggest anybody else, and I said the postmaster, Mr. Millar. He said he would make inquiries, and if the department said Mr. Millar was a good man, he would try and arrange for him to pay the money. Two or three days later he told me that the thing was all arranged—that the Postal Department gave a good character of Mr. Millar. I left Wellington and went to Auckland without any paper. Mr. Cadman was in Auckland some time after, and I asked him if he would be good enough to give me authority to get information in connection with these blocks at the Native Office in Auckland, and he said he would. Mr. Bate, the Secretary to the Minister, told me of Mr. Edgar, that he would give me the information. Mr. Edgar gave me the information I wanted, and gave me the names of the different shares that all the owners had in these three blocks. Soon after I went to Hokianga to see the owners of the different blocks. I went by the way of Dargaville. I saw Wi Rikihana. I stated that I came down to see him, to go with him to see the owners of the Kaitaia Block. He asked me the price. I told him that when we got the owners all together we would talk of the price. He said, "You and I are friends; cannot you tell me the price now?" I said I did not want any one to know. It would be 4s. an acre, but he was not to tell anybody. He replied the land would go at that price. I asked him to come with me and see the others, and I would pay him. He said he could not go, but if I went to his relative, Herewini te Toko, it would do. I went to Herewini te Toko, and saw him at Mr. Hardiman's. He told me that Wi Rikihana was to go with me to see the other chiefs. He said I knew them all myself: that he was really sick and could not go. He asked me the price, and I stated what I had previously told Rikihana. He said the land would go, because some of them offered it to Sam Yates at 2s. 6d. an acre. I went to different places and saw all the owners but one, and he was at work on a gum-field at Parengarenga, at the North Cape. I saw the chief, Waka Rangaunu, and I got him to write a letter to this man at Parengarenga, to William Brown (Wiremu Paraone) and I gave the man £3 to convey the letter to him. We then fixed upon a day to meet at Rawene, and I think it was Thursday, the 3rd December, 1891. They all attended that day in Flood's house but Rikihana and Ngawaka. They were all present with their friends. Mr. Cochrane was there as licensed interpreter. It was the first time Cochrane and I had met. I told Cochrane to inform the owners that there were some white men present and old friends; that whatever happened before, they were now to settle about the land. I told Mr. Cochrane to state that I was acting as their agent, and had nothing to do with the Government; that it was a private conversation I had in their own place when they agreed to take 4s. an acre, and that none had asked more, except Herewini te Toko, and that he asked 5s. an acre; that now that we were all here together I would split the difference between the 4s. and the 5s. and give them 4s. 6d., and that I would pay all the expenses; and that whatever the balance was would be my own. They clapped their hands, and they all seemed pleased. I told them that I would get Mr. Cochrane to draw out an agreement, and that I would want them all to sign it. They said with one voice that they would. I think it was next day I requested Waka Rangaunu to sign the agreement. He asked me where Robert Cochrane was. I told him he was in his office. He said, "Come on until we see Robert." I went with him to Cochrane, who made out a duplicate agreement with him in English and in Maori. He said that was all right; but Timoti Puhipi was a great chief, and he had a great deal of respect for him. Timoti did not want to sell the land, and that he