SESS. II.—1897.
NEW ZEALAND.

# NATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

(MR. HOUSTON, CHAIRMAN.)

REPORT ON THE KAPITI ISLAND PUBLIC RESERVE BILL.

## REPORT.

I AM directed to report that the Committee to whom was referred the above-mentioned Bill has, after taking evidence, notes of which are attached, duly considered the same, and are of opinion that the Bill should not be allowed to proceed in its present form, but that a short Bill be passed this session preventing all private dealings with the land for twelve months, and in the meantime the Government should meet the Natives and endeavour to arrange matters with the owners.

16th December, 1897. ROBERT M. HOUSTON, Chairman.

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 1897.

THE Committee met at 11 a.m. pursuant to notice.

*Present:* Mr. Houston (Chairman), Hon. J. Carroll, Mr. Carson, Mr. Field, Mr. Heke, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Kaihau, Mr. Monk, Mr. O'Meara, Mr. Parata, Mr. Pere, Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, and Mr. Stevens.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Kapiti Island Public Reserve Bill was brought up for consideration, Mr. Sheridan being present for purpose of giving any necessary information.

On the motion of Mr. Heke, *Resolved*, That all evidence taken in connection with the case be taken down by shorthand-writer.

Petition No. 318 of Raiha Puaha and 11 others in opposition to the Bill was then read. A number of Natives were present in support of the petition, the following giving evidence, viz.: Hemi Kuti, Tatana Whataupoko, Hanikamu te Hiko, Raiha Puaha, and Heni te Rei. (See minutes of evidence attached.)

After completion of evidence the Natives withdrew, and the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon gave notice that he would move at next meeting, "That the Committee recommend the Bill be allowed to proceed, and also that full and liberal value be paid for the island, and the proceeds invested in annuities for the owners and their descendants, or in the purchase of lands of equal value and giving equal returns."

THURSDAY, 16TH DECEMBER, 1897.

The Committee met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to notice.

*Present:* Mr. Houston (Chairman), Hon. J. Carroll, Mr. Carson, Mr. Field, Mr. Heke, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Kaihau, Mr. Monk, Mr. Parata, Mr. Pere, Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, and Mr. Stevens.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Kapiti Island Public Reserve Bill was again brought up, Mr. Sheridan being in attendance to give any information required.

After discussion, the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon withdrew the motion of which he gave notice yesterday, and moved, That the Bill be proceeded with.

As an amendment to this, Mr. Heke moved, That the Committee report that the Bill should not be allowed to proceed, but that a short Bill be passed this session preventing any private dealings with the land for twelve months, and in the meantime the Government should meet the Natives and endeavour to arrange matters with the owners.

On the amendment being put, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow:—

*Ayes*, 8.—Mr. Parata, Mr. Pere, Mr. Kaihau, Mr. Field, Mr. Carson, Mr. Heke, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Houston.

*Noes*, 4.—Hon J. Carroll, Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Monk.

The amendment was therefore carried.

Right Hon. R. J. Seddon then moved, That the Bill be reported to the House this day, and that the petition of Raiha Puaha and eleven others be referred to the Government for consideration. This was agreed to. (See I.-3, Reports.)

A letter from Messrs. Stafford, Treadwell, and Field *re* Kapiti Island, received after the Bill had been considered, was read as follows :—

SIR,— Government Insurance Buildings, Panama Street, Wellington, 16th December, 1897.

*Kapiti Island Reserve Bill.*—We have just learned that this Bill is before the Native Affairs Committee for consideration this morning. We are unaware what attitude the Native owners adopt towards the Bill beyond the fact that several of them have informed us that they are opposed to it.

We are, however, concerned on behalf of several clients who are interested in the island, in particular Mr. Malcolm McLean, the present lessee of the larger portion of the island. This gentleman holds leases of practically the whole of the Rangatira, Kaiwharawhara, and Maraetakaroro Blocks. These leases are not entirely complete, for the reason that in some cases there are signatures wanting, but they are valid documents, which the Native Land Court will confirm. Mr. McLean has for the past eighteen months been in possession under them, and has made his home there, and effected improvements. It would therefore be grossly unfair that the Bill, if favourably considered by the Committee, should not protect our client's leases.

In respect of all portions of the above land to which our client has not an absolutely confirmable lease owing to want of signatures, he is the holder of the balance of the term therein acquired by Mr. H. A. Field, M.H.R., in or about 1881.

Mr. McLean is also the owner by purchase, which has been duly confirmed by the Court, of 12½ acres, being one-fourth of the Rangatira-Kapiti 4A Block.

Our Mr. Field is the owner in fee-simple, under a confirmed transfer, of 12½ acres, part of Rangatira Kapiti No. 4A. Block, which he bought as a building-site for the use of his family in the summer. He is naturally averse to this land being taken from him. He also holds a confirmed mortgage over the interest of Hanikamu te Hiko, containing 100 acres, in the Waiorua Kapiti No. 5 Block, Section No. 2.

We shall be happy to afford any other information which may assist the Committee in this matter.

Yours, &c.,
STAFFORD, TREADWELL, AND FIELD.

The Hon. the Chairman, Native Affairs Committee, House of Representatives.

It was resolved that all evidence in connection with the Kapiti Island Public Reserve Bill be attached to report.

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# MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 1897. (MR. HOUSTON, Chairman.)

HEMI KUTI examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] The Committee wish you to state in as few words as possible anything that you have to say in support of the petition against the Bill now before the Committee?—The Committee has before it the petition that we have sent in, and what we have now to say is in support of the request contained in our petition. What we above all other things desire is to retain this land in our possession. This land has been the support—the mother's milk—of our ancestors and ourselves from the time of their coming from Kawhia, and it is the only land now remaining to the Ngatitoa. The Ngatitoa hapu still are, as they have always been, supporters of the Government, and they have sold all their other lands to the Government—more than twenty millions of acres—that is, in both Islands. Well, the purchase-money received by the Ngatitoa for lands sold by them has been spent. We are now at the present day in occupation of the island. We live upon it. From the time of the *Raupatu* (conquest) up to the present day we have been in continuous occupation. During recent years the land has been under lease, and we receive the rents from time to time. Now, our descendants will not be able to live on money, but they will on the land. The money that I alluded to just now as the purchase-money of lands sold to the Crown has melted away; and, as I have said before, this is the only land that we still hold in our possession, and that we would be able to leave to our descendants. Another thing is that Kapiti Island is a desirable possession in this way: By its natural resources it provides a lot of food—birds, fish, potatoes—food of all kinds; in fact, no part of the main-land provides food so abundantly as this island. This, then, is the point of view from which we look upon the present proposal. We ask the Government to take into consideration these facts, and come to our assistance. I was asked to condense what I had to say, but I think I have pretty well stated what we desire.

2. *Hon. J. Carroll.*] What rents are you getting from the island?—Some of it is leased as high as 2s. per acre, some for 1s. per acre, and some less. What I wish to point out is that as soon as these leases have expired our descendants then surviving will go back to the island to live, recognising that it is, as I have said, a place that provides abundant supplies of food.

3. Has any part of the island been sold by the Natives at all?—Yes; the southern end of the island was sold about fifty years ago by Te Rauparaha—the original conquering Te Rauparaha—to Brown.

4. Was Te Rauparaha then in a position to have sold the whole of the island if he had liked?—I do not think he could, because he was not the only chief; the Ngatitoa was a big tribe.

5. *Mr. Monk.*] How many acres were sold?—About 617 acres.

6. *Mr. Stevens.*] What is the total annual amount of the rents received by the Natives?—It is not much. As I have stated just now, some of it is let at 1s. per acre, and some over that price. Of course, there is the 600 acres to be deducted from the 5,000 acres in the island. I should think the average would be over 1s. per acre.

7. Is the average rent 1s. 6d. per acre, do you think?—Well, I do not know what my neighbours are getting—they have entered into a new lease; I think it is on a sliding scale.

8. With whom have they entered into the new lease?—Mr. McLean.

9. For how many years?—I think it is for twenty-one years. I do not know whether the old lease has been renewed or a new lease made. For my part of the land the new lease is not completed yet—only an agreement to lease.

10. For how many years?—Twenty-one years.

11. *Mr. Wi Pere.*] When did you and the other Natives cease to live on the island?—My people or my mother's people about the year 1850—it was leased then to Mr. Brown—those living to the south of my family's portion left still later.

12. But all your lands are under lease?—Yes.

13. And you are now desirous that your lands should not pass to the Crown?—Well, speaking personally, if I had no children I should not object; but realising the position as we do—that we have no other land to leave for the support of our descendants—then we do not want to part with the last possession that we have got.

14. Supposing that the Government was to see its way to give you in exchange for this, better land, and more land, what would you have to say then?—Well, where would it be? If it was proposed to give land about Levin, or Otaki, or Shannon, or that direction, personally I should agree, so far as my own interests are concerned, but I have no right to agree on behalf of other people.

15. Would you be prepared to accept money compensation?—Well, money I would not be able to accept, for the reason that I have already explained—that money has a faculty of melting away in various directions.

16. *Mr. Kaihau.*] Then, as a matter of fact, the whole of the island is under lease—there is not a single acre of what is owned by the Natives that is not under lease? No; the whole of the island, generally speaking, is under lease. I am not in a position to speak as regards the share of others, but as far as my own is concerned there is only a very small portion that is left out of the lease for occupational purposes when we desire to go backwards and forwards to the island. The land that was originally sold by Te Rauparaha to the European Brown is now the property of his descendants.

17. And have you no land at all in the South Island? I know when the Ngatitoa sold their lands in the South Island, as I have described, that certain reserves were made, but those reserves have disappeared. I do not know where they have gone to, and our present intention is that our descendants should look forward some day to re-entering upon possession or occupation of this island.

18. Therefore you oppose this Bill that proposes to take over the island? Yes; we would suffer if we were to agree to the Bill.

19. *Mr. Monk.*] Supposing that the Government, as a matter of policy, felt themselves compelled to take this island, would the Natives prefer to have an annuity in perpetuity rather than the payment of a lump sum?—Well, that is much the same as leasing. Of course, that might be satisfactory to us in the present generation; but what about our descendants; where is there any land for them if we were to do this?

20. Your descendants could save out of their annuity and purchase land for themselves, but they could never become poor or paupers?—What would be the amount per year?

21. I am not saying anything about that, but merely wishing to place the principle before you?—Of course, I have put my view of the case before the Committee, as we desire to see things arranged; but I realise that if the Government feel compelled to take this island, we can do nothing but suffer it; we cannot hope to successfully contend against them.

22. If taken, it will not be for a private purpose but rather for a sentimental one, to preserve the Native birds and animals; in fact, to be retained in its original condition as a memorial of the history of Te Rauparaha and the Ngatitoa?—Yes; it is to preserve the birds, &c. Well, I think that the welfare and preservation of human beings should take precedence of birds.

23. I quite agree with you; but both may be preserved?—During the past fifty years the Maoris have been in receipt of moneys from various sources; but, in spite of this, they have been steadily and gradually decreasing.

24. *Mr. Hunter.*] I would like to ask what Natives of those interested in Kapiti are represented here?—Every one is here, so far as I know, except Wi Parata.

25. Can you tell the Committee whether the whole of the Natives are opposed to this Bill?—We have expressed our views in the petition now before the Committee; and all are here in support of those views. We all object to the Bill.

27. *Hon. J. Carroll.*] Supposing Parliament insists on passing this Bill, what terms would you be inclined to favour in the way of compensation to the Natives, whether in the shape of land; or that the purchase-money should be funded for them, and that they should receive an annuity year by year for ever?—Well, that is a question I do not feel in a position to answer in an off-hand manner.

27. What guarantee is there, supposing this Bill does not pass, that the Native owners will not sell to the Government in the ordinary way?—Well, if each man voluntarily sells his own share or interest in the land no one can be blamed for that except himself, and no trouble will result.

28. That is open to them, of course, you are aware?—Yes.

29. You say in your petition that you look upon this land as your "mother's milk." You also state that you intend, or that the Natives are inclined, to go back and settle on that land. Then you tell us that you have already contracted new leases for long terms?—Yes, that is so; but the Committtee will, no doubt, recognise that we have in view the interests of our successors—those who will succeed to our interests after us. We are not speaking on behalf of ourselves personally.

30. And, so far as you are concerned at the present time, you are quite content to lease the block instead of reoccupying it?—It is our regular practice to go there at certain times, and Ropata, and others who have not leased, live there. I should have stated that before.

31. But yourself and some others have given new leases?—Yes, I have given an agreement to lease. It is not that we of the old generation wish to obtain the island for ourselves, it is for our children who come after us, all the other lands having been got rid of.

32. *Mr. Heke.*] What division of Kapiti do you represent?—No. 3.

33. How many acres?—About 375 acres.

34. What is the number of owners of that division?—There are ten of us, six out of the ten being my own family.

35. And, as far as you know, the whole of the ten object to the Bill?—Yes.

36. Can you tell us what rents you are getting?—We are not getting much for the 375 acres—only £15 a year. It was leased fifteen years ago to Mr. Field.

37. What is your knowledge in respect to the value of money to the Maoris?—When I am asked my opinion as to that, I may say that, in my opinion, land is a more valuable possession to them than money ever can be.

38. Have you any knowledge at all of the value of money, or the use of money by putting it out for investment purposes?—It depends on how much money you have got.

39. Say, if you get a money payment for your 375 acres, have you any knowledge of what that would bring in in interest?—Well, of course, that would not support my people as the land would.

40. Why?—Because they can go there and live upon it. It has the natural advantages of food, fish, birds, and everything they require.

41. And as to money itself—have you any knowledge as to what interest you can get on investing it—does interest rise or fall or what?—Well, it is now about 4½ per cent. to 5 per cent. I myself could of course manage; but I could not say for those that come after me. The land will be better for them; because if they had the money—we all know how we waste money, a great many of us, and how it diminishes.

42. And one of your strong points is that, after you are dead, your descendants would go on this land and live there and make use of it as you are now?—Yes. I think the Native race will want a few more islands before long if they go on selling as they are doing.

43. *The Chairman.*] Do you know if any shares in the island have already been sold?—I believe one or two have been mortgaged, and I think 10 or 12 acres have been sold to private people.

44. Do you know the total amount of rent derived from the lands leased?—We summed it up just now at over £200, at 1s. an acre; but it is worth more than that.

45. But you do not know the actual amount of the rent?—Well, it is something under £500.

*Mr. Field:* I should say that it is from £250 to £300.

46. *The Chairman.*] Have any of your people sold out their interests—parted with their freehold altogether?—Yes, a few acres have been sold; one small piece of about 12 acres.

47. Has there been any land sold recently?—I do not think so.

48. When was this 12 acres sold?—I think a couple or three years ago.

49. You say that some of the Natives live on the island?—They are just going back to it—the owners of Maraetakaroro—about 700 acres. It had been leased, but they are now going back to it.

50. *Mr. Heke.*] Do you know who they are?—Yes; Ropatas, the two brothers who are present here.

51. But they have not been living on it before this?—Yes, they have been there before, and their father was. Not permanently, but off and on. I think Mr. Field leased their part; but the lease has run out, and they are going back to live upon it.

TATANA WHATAUPOKO examined.

52. *The Chairman.*] The Committee would like you to state as concisely as possible if you can supplement what the previous witness has said without going over the same ground again: this will save time very much?—I shall have to go over some of the ground again, as part of what he said does not entirely express the wishes of all of us. Our desire is, first, to oppose this Bill, and our reason for doing so is that we have no desire to sell the land whatsoever. The Committee may know that in the year 1846 the Ngatitoa began to sell their lands—this island they did not desire to sell. The portion that has been acquired by Brown was paid for by that European in blankets, rum, tobacco, &c. In the year 1847 this pakeha Brown was taken by Tē Rangiata and driven away, and all his property confiscated, because they were not willing that the land should pass. From that time down to the present the land has remained in our possession, and we draw what the land produces—the rent money is received by us. Now, if we part with the land on the conditions laid down by this Bill we will very shortly cease to derive any benefit whatsoever from it. I do not know that I need say any more but to emphasize that I and the others with me—all of us here—will not, under any consideration, agree to sell this land. We will not do it.

53. *Hon. J. Carroll.*] Supposing that the Government took this land, and paid full compensation for it, but, instead of paying over the consideration-money to spend as they like, it was funded for the benefit of the Natives, and if they got an annuity equal to the rents they are now receiving as long as any of them or their descendants live, and at the same time some of them were to have an interest in the land in the way of trusteeship for the purposes named in the Bill, how would you consider that?—I do not know how to reply to any such proposal as that. I stick to what I first said—that I oppose the Bill and will continue to oppose it.

54. Then, how would you consider this proposal: Supposing the Government were to make an exchange—to give the Natives other lands suitable for their purposes and equal in value to this?—I cannot give a direct reply to such a question as that, because we have not as yet had any proposal made to us. We have not considered the matter and resolved upon a reply to which we can all agree.

55. *Mr. Stevens.*] How many acres of level land are there—land that can be ploughed—in Kapiti?—I have some difficulty in replying to that; I could only say approximately.

56. Would any of the land grow wheat?—Yes; and many other things—beans, potatoes, cabbages, and all sorts of things.

57. But is not nearly the whole of the island mountainous, and steep, and stony on the faces?—Yes, that is perfectly true. I will illustrate it in this way: The walls of this house represent the steep parts, but when you get on to the roof that is good soil that can be worked. I was born on the island myself, and grew up there on the foods that were cultivated and produced there by my elders and parents.

58. What area do you and your family hold?—About 370 acres—there are twelve of us.

59. That 370 acres has now been represented by two spokesmen, and nobody for the rest of the land?—No. We are the owners of that 370 acres; yet our remarks apply to the whole of the island, seeing that we have been selected to represent the people generally in speaking to their desires in this question.

60. *Mr. Wi Pere.*] Would you be satisfied if the Bill were amended in this way: that this island should be reserved for you members of the Ngatitoa Tribe and the birds—would that meet your wishes? I would be willing that it be reserved in this fashion: that it be reserved to us as an inalienable possession, and that we had the sole right of disposal and management, according to Native custom, and be not interfered with.

61. Very well, you have agreed to that. Suppose that had been done—that the land had been reserved in the manner I propose—would you not then be agreeable to lease it to the Queen?—I cannot say Yes, or No, in an offhand way to a question like that. I should have to submit it to the people generally, and talk the matter over, and come to you with the general wish of the people.

62. And if you were to get land in another place in exchange for this land?—I have replied to that question already. I give the same reply now.

63. You do not want other land?—No. What I said was that we must talk the matter over. The proposal requires consideration.

64. Very well, then; there are now three proposals submitted for your consideration—either to have the island reserved for the Natives only and the birds, &c., and afterwards lease the lands to the Queen, or that equivalent land should be given to you at some other place in exchange for the island, or that compensation should be paid and funded for the benefit of the Native owners and their descendants. Do you think that, if you were given a certain time to consult over the matter together, you would arrive at a decision to-day?—I would not undertake to say Yes; but if we were given the remainder of the day we would try to come to a conclusion.

65. *Mr. Kaihau.*] If some of the owners are willing to sell their shares to the Government—when some had agreed, would not the others be likely also to agree?—All I can say to that is that I am deputed as one of the persons to come here and speak the present wish of the people. If any individual member, after having instructed me to speak as I have, changes his mind in the way you suggest, I am not responsible for his wrongful action.

66. Supposing the Bill provided that this island was to be reserved for the benefit of the Maoris—but under control of the Queen—what would you say to that if the birds, &c., were reserved under such rules as the Queen thinks fit?—The description of reserve that I should be willing to agree to is this: that the land should be restricted in such a way as to prevent every possibility of selling it to any one.

67. *Mr. Monk.*] You belittled the payment made by Brown for the land he holds. Is it not a fact that the land was given in compensation for plundering Brown's store by Te Rauparaha?—It is not as if the man was living at some other place when his goods were seized and confiscated; he was there when his goods were taken away from him.

68. That was after the Wairau massacre, was it not?—But Wairau was not a massacre. Yes; it was after the fighting at Wairau, the blame of which rests at the door of the pakeha, who instructed that the Maoris should be shot when they fought. It was in 1847 when Brown's things were seized and he was turned off.

69. At any rate, Te Rauparaha had taken as much as was thought sufficient payment for the land; he gave back what he had taken in goods?—It was afterwards that arrangements were made by all Ngatitoa generally which established Brown's position in respect of the land.

70. But it was not the tribe that had so much to say about it as what Te Rauparaha ordered?—Te Rauparaha could only control things in so far as he was permitted by the tribe. If the tribe saw fit to accept a proposition of his he would be upheld in enforcing it.

71. *Mr. Heke.*] Can you tell the Committee whether any of the Natives present are large owners in Kapiti Island?—Yes.

72. Will you name them?—Well, there is Te Whiwhi, Hemi Kuti, these two men here, Ropata Brothers, and Erinora; also Raiha Puaha.

73. Which of these holds the biggest interest in any division of Kapiti Island?—Of course, Wi Parata is also an owner. I did not wish for a moment to deny that these people have rights equal in value to ours.

74. With respect to the people you have mentioned, do they hold large interests at all, or can you give the Committee any information as to the areas held by each individual?—Speaking approximately, Te Wiwi owns about 400 acres, and Ropata Brothers hold about 400 or 500 acres.

75. What is Erinora's interest?—I think, about 250 acres.

76. And it is safe to suppose that you are opposing the Bill on behalf of yourself and these Natives present?—Yes; I oppose it on my own behalf, and on behalf of all the people assembled here.

77. *The Chairman.*] What is your share in this block of land?—Well, as a matter of fact, I

only possess a small area—only a few acres; but if these few acres are successful in upsetting this Bill I shall be exceedingly pleased.

78. How many acres do you hold?—Twenty acres—that is, my own personal share; 10 acres were my ancestors' burial-place.

79. Have you offered lately to sell your share to the Government?—Well, I heard it stated that the Government desired to purchase the island, and I had, in a conversation with Mr. Sheridan, offered it in a jocular way. I never had any real intention of selling. I went to Mr. Sheridan about another matter. I was selling a certain interest that I then held in Kawhia, and while there this conversation took place. It was never serious.

80. Who started the conversation about Kapiti Island?—I do not know. I did not place any importance on the conversation, otherwise I might remember.

81. If Mr. Sheridan had made an offer to purchase your holding at that time, would you have sold?—I do not know about that.

HANIKAMU TE HIKO examined.

82. *The Chairman.*] Will you please state what you have to say on the subject of this Kapiti Island Reserve Bill as briefly as possible? Yes; I shall not keep the time of the Committee very long, because there are two proposals that have been made to the witnesses that preceded me, and they have taken a firm hold of my ear. One of these was that the land should be made a reserve under certain conditions for the Natives, and the other was that other land should be given in exchange. Well, I now ask that an opportunity be given us to go into this matter, and consult amongst ourselves as to whether we should be prepared to accept.

83. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] Are you aware of negotiations going on for the sale of Kapiti to other persons than the Government—say, during the last year?—No; I have not heard that. I know that, as a matter of fact, the interests of certain owners in the island have been sold.

84. To whom were they sold?—I do not know to whom they were sold; I know the persons who sold them. Hohepa Horomona was one of the sellers.

85. *Mr. Heke.*] Do you know what areas are have been sold?—Twelve acres each by these persons.

RAIHA PUAHA examined.

86. *The Chairman.*] The Committee will be glad to hear what you have to say about this matter?—I speak about my own portion of the island, Waiorua Block. The previous witnesses have stated what they had to say about their own particular portion; but they have not said anything about mine. I will not agree to this Government Bill which proposes to seize and take from us our land. Of course, it means the whole island, and that includes my land; and as far as I am concerned I will not agree. If everybody else is going to sell, let them sell, but my land I shall keep for my child. I will not accept any money for it. My land will still remain mine, in the midst of that Government land. I need not say anything more to the Committee than this: that nothing will induce me to agree to the Bill.

87. *Mr. Monk.*] In reference to the inquiry made of the last witness by the Premier, I may ask if there have been any negotiations on the part of Europeans in Wellington to purchase the island which have taken place within the last twelve months?—I know of no such thing. My interest is under lease.

88. To whom?—To Mr. Morison, the lawyer.

89. How much is it leased to him for?—1s. 6d. per acre.

90. Is there any provision for his purchasing the land?—No, the only provision is that, if he finds that he is unable to pay the rent, the land is to come back to me.

91. For how long is the lease?—Twenty years.

92. When was it made?—In the winter of last year—1896.

93. *Mr. Parata.*] Does the lease include the right of purchase?—No, there is no purchasing clause in the lease. I am perfectly willing to produce the lease for the inspection of the Committee if they so desire.

94. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] What value do you put upon the land per acre?—I do not place any price upon the land at all. All that I desire to say is what I have said. I want some one to occupy the land and improve it.

95. Have there been any improvements put on the land by the present lessee?—Well, that has got nothing to do with me. He having leased the land it is for him to improve it; his sheep must be looked after; there are 400 acres. It is his business and interest to see that it is improved.

96. Has he got it stocked?—I do not know. All that I trouble myself about is to draw my money, and if he does not do anything with the land it is his fault.

97. If the Government gave you the same rent as Mr. Morison pays, what difference would it make to you?—Oh, no; because that would mean that my child would never see the land.

98. *Mr. Carson.*] Would you be willing to exchange the land for land elsewhere of equal value?—Well, I should be very exacting in my demand as to what should be a just equivalent for this land, and would have to be satisfied that I got all that I asked for before I agreed to accept it. Because this is a very sacred possession. Kapiti is a name famous in the mouths of the Ngatitoa; it has been connected with them for generations, and it is *tupuna* to my child.

99. You would be open to consider the matter?—I do not know.

100. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] I should like to get some explanation as to why you love the lawyer better than the Government?—That is my business.

101. Suppose the Government gave you 3s. an acre?—I would not let them have it if they offered me £1. It is a valued possession of our ancestors; and if the Government got hold of it, we should never see it again, and my son would never be able to look upon the land and say, "That is the island that belonged to my ancestors."

HENI TE REI examined.

102. *The Chairman.*] The Committee would like to hear what you have to say on this question?—I shall speak about a certain clause in the petition by which we claim that this land is the *waiu*, or "mother's milk," handed down by our ancestors from generation to generation. Now, the expression "mother's milk" refers directly to the income derived from the island in the form of rent-moneys; and also to the birds which the island produces, and the fish which may be taken off the coast. When I leased this land, I reserved out of the lease about half an acre, so that at any time we wished to go over we could occupy this piece of reserve, and fish, or do whatever else we desired. And I may say that, when I discovered the Bill that has been proposed by the Government to deal with the island in this way, I have been weeping ever since; and I feel that I cannot, under any consideration, agree to such a proposal. I cannot agree to the island passing over to the hands of the Government and away from us, because it has been a valued possession handed down to us from generation to generation, and that we hold in remembrance of our ancestors. And, no matter how you propose to take it, I will never, under any consideration, agree to it. I put it to the Government in this way: that I am absolutely without another acre of land in the world except what I hold in that island; and are they going to take that from me? I am the mother of many children, and the grandmother of many grandchildren. That is all.

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