

to prejudice their own right to land under the main Ngaitahu claim as borne out in the report of Commissioners Smith and Nairn. Well, the Maoris not being perfectly satisfied as to the position, subsequently wrote to Mr. Cadman inquiring what was their real position in regard to the land which had been promised by him would be set aside for landless Natives, and on the 16th day of February, 1893, they received this reply from Mr. Hazelden, who was then Under-Secretary of the Native Department:—

“Justice Department, 16th February, 1893.

“I HAVE received your letter of the 13th day of January. In regard to the lands which are proposed to be set apart and given to landless Maoris and Maoris who have not sufficient land for the support of themselves and families, if you people say that you have still further claims to land, that is a matter for Parliament to look into and consider.

“From your loving friend,

“C. J. A. HAZELDEN, Secretary.

“To Wi Naihira and others, of Kaiapoi.”

Now, Mr. Chairman, I desire to particularly call your attention to a statement which has been personally made to myself by certain of the Ministers of this present Government, to the effect that in their opinion this claim was satisfied through the fact that land was provided for landless Natives in the South Island by the Act of 1896. Now, sir, this contention I must entirely deny; and I point out that, although this letter of Mr. Hazelden to Wi Naihira and others which I have read to you is dated 16th February, 1893, and says that land would be set apart for the South Island Maoris, yet from that time in 1893 down to the present day, 1910, these promises have never been carried out. Land, sir, has been set apart for landless Maoris, but up to the present it has been quite impossible for them to occupy and live upon the land so set apart. For this reason, sir: Take the lands which have been set apart at Waiau, in the Southland District, as an example. The land is at least forty or fifty miles west of Invercargill, and remote from where the Maoris are now living, and there is no road or means of access to the land. What is the object of setting apart land for them when they cannot get to it, and when it is all bush, and not bush of any value, nor is it even good land? Some of the lands which were given for the landless Natives are situated on the eastern side of Stewart Island. Where are they going to find people who will be willing to occupy these lands, and what means of access will be provided to them? It may take two or three generations in order to render it possible to occupy them.

*The Chairman:* Did they have no say in the selection of the land?

*Mr. Parata:* The surveyors said they had surveyed these lands under instructions from the Crown Lands Department. After that the Maoris applied for other and better lands, stating that the land provided was not satisfactory. Now, Mr. Hosking told this Committee how lands had been set apart, and he referred to the Act of 1906; but when that Act of 1906 was introduced—called the Landless Natives Bill—a deputation came here to Wellington to interview the Premier and Native Minister, and protested against that portion of the preamble of the Bill which set forth that the provision of land proposed therein was for the purpose of extinguishing the Ngaitahu claim. And the Maoris having made their representation to the Premier and the Native Minister, the Premier said, “Yes, we are willing to strike out the preamble of the Bill, and I will see that the Bill does not contain any provision to injure or prejudice the Maoris or prevent them making any further just claim against the Crown in regard to their main Ngaitahu claim.” That position was made perfectly clear by Mr. Carroll himself to that deputation. And that was how the Bill was passed. If they had not foregone that preamble I should, myself, have opposed the passage of the Bill, and European members who were not in sympathy with the Bill would have supported me, and it would not have passed into law. Mr. Chairman, the report on this petition on which I am now speaking deliberately says that the land set apart under this Act for the landless Natives of the South Island was to wipe out this Ngaitahu claim. I say that that is another deliberate attempt on the part of the Government Crown Lands Department to injure the Maoris and deny them their just rights. I think that is all I need say on that head.

*The Chairman:* Is the next a very long heading?

*Mr. Parata:* I have done my best to cut it down. I have referred to Commissioners Smith and Nairn, and I have said, and I desire again to repeat, that that was the only satisfactory inquiry that we have ever had into the South Island land claim, and we rely upon the report of that Commission, and we ask for its fulfilment, as they had the benefit of the evidence of all the witnesses who appeared personally before them—Mr. Kemp, Mr. Mantell, Captain Symonds, the chiefs, and men of position who knew the particulars. There is no reason why I should labour or delay the matter any longer now. I, as the member and representative and mouthpiece of the Maoris, ask on their behalf that the claim contained in their petition which is now under consideration shall be duly, carefully, honourably, and justly considered, inquired into, and dealt with, and that opportunity be given the Maori people to substantiate and establish their claim. Now, sir, I would like you to read a previous petition on this same subject, a copy of which I have here. I did not know until just now that it had been already published in parliamentary paper G.-7, 1876. It is not very long. I wish to have it read. You will see from it that the Maoris were promised that one acre in every ten and one block in every ten should be returned to us when the purchased land came to be surveyed.

The interpreter, Mr. Barclay, now read the petition, as follows:—

*Petition of Ngaitahu Natives re their Claim.*

Friends, Salutations! May God extend His mercies to you! We are here spreading before you the causes of that thorough and discontent agitating the Natives of the Middle Island.