

known as the Puketi Block, containing 1,919 acres, in the Whangaroa District, North Auckland. Records showed that this block of land was included in a purchase by James Shepherd from the Maori owners on the 18th August, 1836. The land was transferred by gift by him to his brother-in-law, J. M. Orsmond, in 1841, and a grant was issued to J. M. Orsmond for the land in 1844. This grant was called in under the Land Claims Settlement Act, 1856, and dealt with by the Bell Commission. The result of this inquiry was that a grant dated the 19th January, 1864, was issued to James Shepherd, the original purchaser, for two areas—1,919 acres (the subject of this petition) and 98 acres—being part of the original grant to J. M. Orsmond. The records show that the Native title to this block had been extinguished, since 1836, by private purchase. A search of the records shows that the Crown had no interest in the land until 1917, when it acquired a portion from the then European owners; and further that the block in question was sold in 1884 to a timber company, apparently for the timber. The petitioners have not made out any case for relief.

*Petition No. 51.*

113. Henry Pitman and others in this petition claimed, through one Tauwhitu, a block of land on the Whangateau Harbour, called the Pikiomaha Block, which they also claimed was *papatapu* land—that is, Native land that had not been investigated. From copies of deeds produced it was shown that transactions in connection with the purchase of an area of land including the block in question were commenced by the Crown by the signing by Maori owners of a deed of conveyance in 1841; and further deeds were signed by other Maori owners in 1844, 1853, and 1854. By one of these deeds—in 1853—signed by Tauwhitu, the whole of the signatories' interest in "all Mahurangi" was disposed of, and the boundaries of "all Mahurangi" are shown by sketch on the deed, and included the Pikiomaha Block. It is evident, however, by the deed that Tauwhitu did not claim the Pikiomaha Block, but claimed, with Parihoru, a block south of the Whangateau Harbour. The area referred to by the petitioner appears to have been leased by the Crown to a Maori woman, Mere Kewene, of Omaha, in 1887. This lease was transferred by Mere Kewene to G. W. Sim, and from Sim to J. S. Ashton, and from Ashton to H. Ashton, the present holder. The petitioners claim 7,000 or 8,000 acres, or all the land included in the Crown purchases of 1841–1853 lying to the north of the Whangateau Harbour. There is no reliable evidence to support this claim, while the documents produced show that over eighty years ago the Crown purchased the whole block of land from Takapuna to Rodney Point, and that the Pikiomaha Block was included in the purchase. The petitioners have not made out any case for relief.

*Petition No. 52.*

114. Herepete Rapihana in this petition claims on behalf of the Pukepoto Natives a block of land near Kaitaia, known as Tangonge Block, containing approximately 1,000 acres. This area was included in a purchase from the Maori owners by the Rev. Joseph Matthews, and a grant for same had been issued by Governor Fitzroy in 1844. This grant, with others, was called in under the Land Claims Settlement Act, 1856, and an inquiry instituted in 1857 before Commissioner Bell. In evidence Mr. Matthews claimed 1,855 acres in the Summerville property at Kaitaia, which included the Tangonge Block, the subject of this petition. He stated that these surveys were made entirely with the knowledge and consent of the Maoris.

115. On a reduction of area by the Court of Claims, Mr. Matthews elected to cut off 685 acres of low swampy land in one piece in the Summerville property. This piece of land—the Tangonge Block—was accordingly resumed by the Crown as surplus land, and a grant was issued to Mr. Matthews for the balance of the Summerville property—viz., 1,170 acres—on the 15th February, 1859. The Tangonge Block has been Crown land since 1858. The petitioner claims that Mr. Matthews, at the Court of Claims, gave the Tangonge Block back to the Natives, whereas Mr. Matthews's written testimony disproves such a contention, and it is evident that any remark made by Mr. Matthews suggesting the return of the