

*Question* : If Wi Katene has stated before the Committee of Native Affairs at Wellington that you approached him and made a certain arrangement, would you deny it ?

*Answer* : No, I had no conversation with Wi Katene about it.

*Question* : Did you see the petitioner (Atiraira Nopera) in the precincts of the Court just before the case was heard ?

*Answer* : I did not see her there.

*Question No. 2* : Have you at any time since told the petitioners, or in any way represented to them, that you were willing to consider their case, and to provide them with land, parcel of the block ?

*Answer* : No, I did not.

*Cross-examined by Mr. Ellison—Question* : No questions.

*Question No. 3* : What were the terms of the conversation between you, Wi Katene, and Hira Parata when you met on Nelson wharf on Monday, the 26th ultimo ?

*Answer* : I remember that well. Hira asked me in the presence of Wi Katene if I had promised a share of the Whakapuaka Block to Wi Katene or others. I said "No."

*Cross-examined by Mr. Ellison* : None.

(Signed) HURIA MATENGA.

The foregoing evidence, written on four sheets of paper numbered consecutively from two to five, were taken before me, Henry Wingman Robinson, Esquire, Stipendiary Magistrate at Nelson, this sixteenth day of November, 1903.

(Signed) H. W. ROBINSON, Stipendiary Magistrate.

179. Two points in connection with the above examination may be noted—(1) That the inquiry was instigated by the Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee *after* he had been informed of the inability of the Magistrate to compel attendance or answers, and (2) that Huria's evidence is unsworn testimony, probably because the Magistrate had no power in the circumstances to have her sworn.

180. At this present hearing evidence was given by Mere Paaka, a Ngatiawa woman, who was born in 1860 and whose husband was one of the conductors in the case of 1883. In answer to Mr. Sim she said :—

I remember the investigation by the Native Land Court in 1883. I was at Nelson then. I heard discussions between Huria and other members of the family regarding this land. *I heard Huria Matenga tell Atiraira (Nopera) and Rangira (Ripene Paremata) that she would conduct their case before the Court, and the other members of the family agreed.* That was freely talked about at that time. That was before the investigation. The result was that Rangira, Atiraira, and others never interfered with the case before the Court, as they were sure that Huria Matenga was looking after their interests. I do not know as to what actually took place in the Court, but it was found afterwards that things were not as expected, and some way was sought to remedy the wrong. How I came to know that what was done in the Court was not quite right was when I learned from Wi Katene Tipo, who was living at Motueka, that the people were petitioning Parliament.

Under cross-examination by Mr. Evans the witness said :—

I was at the 1883 Court, but did not hear the case regarding Whakapuaka. My husband was a conductor. We were there to hear the case, but the women did not talk upon it. It was a long time after that I heard that the decision had gone wrong. I first heard of this when a petition was made to the House 13 years after the decision.

My friendship with Huria lasted all her life. I do not know of Huria's giving evidence before a Magistrate at Nelson. I was living at Motueka thirty years ago. This is the first time I have ever been asked to give evidence about this block. *I was in the home of Huria when the arrangement was made between Huria and the others that she would oppose the claims of Ngatikoata on behalf of them all.*

I do not recall what other people besides Atiraira and Rangira were present when the arrangement was made with Huria. There were quite a number present. *I was present at the arrangement when made at Whakatu (Nelson) before the investigation.*

Re-examined by Mr. Sim she said :—

Hemi Matenga was not present at the discussion between Huria and the family at Nelson before the Court case. Huria was not mentally weak at that time. It was a long time afterwards that she was not so mentally strong. Would not say she was "rorirori"—it may have been old age.

181. This old lady's evidence was found, in any respect in which it could be checked, quite reliable, and I feel that due weight should be given to her testimony, which was not shaken by cross-examination.

182. As regards Huria Matenga's mental state in 1903, the following matter is instructive :—

In 1902, Huria Matenga, while away from the restraining influence of her husband, Hemi Matenga, sold a piece of land called Waikawa Section 11, Subdivision 2, to Mrs. Josephine Love. Later in 1903, in the presence of her husband, she sold the same piece of land to Kairira Tahuaroa. Confirmations of these agreements (and a transfer executed in 1906 in pursuance of Mrs. Love's agreement) came before the Native Land Court on the 26th August, 1909, and following days (Wellington M.B. 16, page 298 and following pages). Huria by this time was dead.