

(b) I have now the honour to report, for the information of His Excellency the Officer administering the Government, that the principal chiefs of the Ngatitooa Tribe residing on the southern shore of Cook's Strait, having crossed over to this side—and Taiaroa, the Chief of the aboriginal tribes in the Middle Island—together with several chiefs of other tribes inhabiting the Nelson Province, being in Wellington, I took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the presence of so many of the parties interested to call a meeting at Porirua (the principal residence of the Ngatitooa in this neighbourhood) for the purpose of discussing the whole question.

(c) The chiefs were exceedingly anxious that a final settlement of all their claims in the Middle Island should take place at once, urging as a principal reason that so many of their leading chiefs had died since the conclusion of the first arrangement; and those who survived had become so weak from recent illness that their existence for any length of time could not be depended upon; and further that a sum so small as £500 being divided once a year among such a number of claimants afforded so trifling an amount to each that there was every probability of the Natives becoming dissatisfied with their bargain before its conclusion, when difficulties, hitherto unforeseen, might be thrown in the way of the settlement of the district.

(d) Taking these reasons into consideration, as well as the fact that so good an opportunity of discussing the question in the presence of the principal chiefs of so many different tribes (including those of the conquerors as well as those of the remnants of the conquered and original possessors of the soil) might not again occur, considering the great influence possessed by Te Rangihaeata and the other Ngatitooa chiefs, not only over their own followers, but extending to the other tribes, inhabiting the Middle Island; looking to the great advantage to be derived from the immediate acquisition of this land for settlement, and *having received the assurances of the chiefs that they would accompany me, as soon as my duties in this province would permit of my crossing to the Middle Island, for the purpose of using their influence in settling with the Natives of their own and other tribes resident there; and that, as soon as proper and sufficient reserves were marked out for their use, they would give up peaceable possession of the country.* I deemed it advisable to accede to their wishes, and accordingly paid them, on the 13th instant, the sum of £2,000, taking a receipt from them for the amount, a translation of which, as well as of the original deed of August, 1853, I do myself the honour to enclose herewith.

(e) This sum and that paid last year amount together to £4,000, leaving £1,000 of the sum originally agreed upon. Of this £1,000, however, I have paid already £700 to the Ngatiawa Tribe in Taranaki for their claims, so that £300 only remain unappropriated. This sum, I feel it my duty to report, will not be sufficient to extinguish the remaining claims of the Natives resident upon the territory now ceded, which is the most populous portion of the Middle Island, and the area of which may be estimated at about eight millions of acres. As soon, however, as I shall have had an opportunity of visiting the spot, and discussing the question with the resident Natives, I will lose no time in making for His Excellency's consideration a report of the amount for which this extensive and valuable district can be finally purchased—the cost under any circumstances is not likely to amount to the rate of one farthing an acre.

(f) I have been engaged during the greater part of the present and past weeks in discussing fully the claims of the different tribes and other questions affecting this transaction, and I have much pleasure in stating that the division of the £2,000 was effected with the most perfect fairness, and gave general satisfaction to the parties concerned, a sum of £200 being paid to Te Rangihaeata, as the principal conqueror of the country and leading chief of the tribe, the remainder of the money being paid to the other chiefs in amounts corresponding to their interest and the number of their relatives and followers.

(g) His Excellency will be glad to learn that the aged chief Te Rangihaeata, who has always been a determined opponent to the sale of any land, took a prominent part in this discussion, exerting all his influence in inducing his followers to bring the negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion and in restraining the exorbitant demands of some of the chiefs. He came forward without hesitation and affixed his name to the deed of sale, being the first time within my knowledge that Te Rangihaeata has voluntarily done so.

(h) I venture to hope that the course which I have adopted on this occasion may meet with His Excellency's approval, as it has finally settled all questions between the Government and the Ngatitooa Tribe as regards an extensive and valuable tract of land, rich in coal, copper, and other minerals, and will, through their influence, materially facilitate the negotiations with the other tribes possessing claims there.

(i) I have the honour to enclose for His Excellency's information the copy of a letter which I have addressed to the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Nelson in reference to this subject.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your very obedient servant,
(Sgd.) DONALD McLEAN,
Chief Commissioner.

94. While on this subject of Ngatitooa deeds and Wi Katene's alleged single-handed efforts to hold the land, we might go back to an earlier sale and its consequences.

95. By a deed dated the 25th October, 1839, the Ngatitooa chiefs at Kapiti Island purported to transfer to William Wakefield as trustee for the Governor, director, and shareholders of the New Zealand Land Company of London, *inter alia*, all the land in the South Island bounded to the south by the forty-third degree of south latitude and including Whakapuaka, which was mentioned with the