

the Governor made haste to buy it; he took time enough to investigate the claim. You have said that one man sold the land, but there were seventy persons consenting to the sale" (129)..... "Before leaving Taranaki, I instructed the Land Purchase Commissioner there to investigate carefully the claims to this piece of land, and not to proceed hastily in the matter. He has since been constantly engaged in inquiring into the question of title, William King also being present at the meetings and admitting that the land belonged to the sellers. After the talk about the Waitara, I crossed the straits to Arapaoa, and saw that section of the tribe which is with Ropoama Te One. I mentioned that a portion of the Waitara had been offered. I recited the boundaries, and asked; 'Does that land belong to King?' The reply was, 'No; if it was on the other side of Waitara his claim would be just, but this side belongs to us; let us have the payment'..... They pressed the matter, and a third time they asked me to give them the payment. I replied, 'Wait until the question is properly settled.' Afterwards they agreed to this. The names of these Arapaoa people who have claims at Waitara are Ropoama Te One, Ripeka, Ngawhena, Herewini, Ihaka, Te Retimona, Timoti, Anaru, Haimona, Henare Rupuha, Arapere, Hamiora, Tohi, Pirihira, Nata, Rakira, Eruera te Rangi, Whiroa, Te Rei, and others. These people consented to the sale. It was I who delayed the matter, wishing that the claims should be investigated upon the land of their forefathers" (130).

94. I beg to remark that one of these speeches, addressed by Mr. McLean to the assembled Chiefs at Ngaruawahia and Kohimarama, was delivered within a few days of the date of Archdeacon Hadfield's letter, and the other a few weeks after. The following are extracts from the Chief Commissioner's evidence at the Bar of the House of Representatives:—

"With reference to the particular block under consideration, the claims of the actual owners were carefully enquired into. Notice was given publicly at the time of the purchase to such absentee claimants as were known to have a right to the soil. It was not considered necessary to go about the country to rake up claims, or to induce Natives to prefer them. It was well known that when any block of land was offered for sale, there was no hesitation on the part of claimants to come forward to receive that portion of the proceeds to which the extent of their claims might entitle them. The sale of any land in the country soon becomes known throughout it from one end to the other, and it is often found that a hundred fictitious claims are adduced when the actual owners altogether do not exceed thirty or forty persons. There has been a great deal said about unsatisfied claims in different parts of the country, but my own conviction is that many of those claims have been manufactured. At all events, I found that in the course of a few months after the time of the first offer of the land and my notification of it to the tribes at the South, several parties were adducing claims who had never previously done so. It is notorious that if any native thinks he has any chance of obtaining money for land, it is an easy matter for him to assert a claim (131).

"During the investigation which took place, and while the difficulty was being adjusted, I felt convinced that the claims then preferred by these conflicting parties were substantially good, and that, in fact, the sale must be proceeded with, or otherwise the natives who had offered the land would be treated with great injustice. The officer whom I instructed to conduct the negotiation (Mr. District Commissioner Parris) was requested to persevere in his inquiries into the matter from time to time; not in any way to hasten the arrangement, but to give full opportunity to opposing claimants to come forward and state their case. He not only did this, but he also took a great deal of trouble in visiting, as far as lay in his power, every part of his district, to make sure that there should be no substantial claim overlooked. I have already stated that there was a public notification from myself, inviting all persons who had claims to bring them forward, in order that they might be carefully investigated. No fresh claims were recorded, however; no rights were shown by the Natives who opposed the sale, *except the right which the land-league conferred upon them, that of claiming land everywhere, and of opposing the sale of land everywhere* (132).

"There was no urgency displayed in this matter, no desire to hasten it, but ample time was given to all parties to put forward their claims; and not only was there ample time given, but claims were solicited and hunted up in every direction in Taranaki itself. Yet, with the exception of the two tribes who sold the land on the banks of the Waitara, and another tribe on the banks of the Waiongana, who were joint claimants to a part of the block, no substantial claims were put in. If I were to say that no other claims were adduced, I should be wrong, but I mean no substantial claims, no claims that could be recognized by the Government, or which would be regarded by the natives as valid. Certainly one man told me that his grandfather had once lived a short time on the land, and that he therefore expected compensation. Another told me that in one of their fights he was wounded and suffered great inconvenience there, and therefore thought it was right that he should have some consideration now that the land was sold. Now, this is the class of claims of which I have just been speaking, which it is clearly the duty of the Government to resist, as otherwise it would be an utter impossibility to carry out any purchase of land without defrauding the real owners. By compensating this class of claimants, the real owners would be deprived of what they are fairly entitled to, and merely because the Government chose to recognize fictitious claims of this character (133).

"The Chief Ropoama, who offered to dispose of his claim, was recognised as the head of the hapus or sub-divisions of the Ngatiawa tribe, who owned the land and sold it. He holds a high position among his people, and is much respected by the Europeans. On several occasions it was contemplated by the Natives of Waitara to invite him there, and to live among them as their Chief, to keep peace and order in the tribe. *In this arrangement Wiremu Kingi* (about whose chieftainship we have heard so much, and who undoubtedly was a Chief of the section of the Ngatiawa at Waikanae) *acquiesced*. No actual payment, or promise of payment, was made to the Natives at Queen Charlotte's

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4th Dec., 1860.

(129) *McLean, Speech at Ngaruawahia,* App. C. 1

(130) *McLean, Speech at the Kohimarama Conference,* App. C. 2.

(131) *McLean, Evidence at the bar of the House of Representatives,* App. C. 3.

(132) *Ibid.*

(133) *Ibid.*