

On the 31st March and 1st April last the Commissioner visited Opunake, and held a sitting, which was attended by the leading Natives connected with that district. Mrs. Plumbridge was present, but she did not attempt to revive this case, though she made general assertions of her rights to land in various parts of the country, which, however, did not appear to receive much assent from the other Natives. As far as I could learn, neither she nor her mother were persons of such importance in the tribes as to make it probable that their claims would be very substantial. Her mother made no claim on the behalf of either, but confirmed the statements as to her previous history made by Mr. Parris in his several reports.

The conclusion at which I have arrived, after a very careful consideration of the case, is, that Mrs. Plumbridge's claim to compensation never had any substantial basis, but that its persistent assertion for fifteen years and upwards, and the failure of the Native Department to dispose of it conclusively in its early stage, when its character had been fully investigated and reported upon by Mr. Parris, and its defects pointed out by him, and recognized by Mr. Under-Secretary Cooper and others, have resulted in the unnecessary sacrifice of £500 worth of the public domain.

I have appended to this report a careful *précis* of the documents which I found on the official file of the Native Department.

8th April, 1881.

WILLIAM FOX,  
West Coast Commissioner.

### Sub-Enclosure 1 to Enclosure in No. 3.

Mrs. PLUMBRIDGE to the WEST COAST COMMISSION, 1880.

TO THE COMMISSIONERS.

Wellington, 12th April, 1880.

This is an application of mine respecting my claims to land in certain portions of Taranaki. The boundaries are Okurukuru on the west, Moturangi is the southern boundary. The Taranaki Tribe are living within these boundaries. I belong to the Taranaki Tribe. There are many lands that I have a claim to, namely, Warea, Okawa, Te Ikaroa-a-mau; there is also some land at Opunake, namely, Waipapa, Rahuitoetoe, Mangahunui, and other portions. This is an application of mine to the Commissioners to give effect to my claim, and to give me compensation either in land or in money. These lands were cultivated by my ancestors, and were by them handed down to my mother, and to me also. I myself cultivated some of these lands.

L. M. PLUMBRIDGE.

### Sub-Enclosure 2 to Enclosure in No. 3.

PRECIS of PAPERS relating to Mrs. PLUMBRIDGE'S CLAIMS.

1. In 1866 an unmarried woman of the name of Ruiha Teira (Louisa Taylor), living apparently at Tauranga, according to her own statement, laid a claim before the Compensation Court at Taranaki, claiming land in the Taranaki District, which claim was disallowed, on the ground of her being an absentee. Mr. Under-Secretary H. Clarke in a minute, subsequently noted, says her claim was never brought before the Compensation Court.

2. On 26th November, 1866, dating at Tauranga, she writes to Sir George Grey (Governor), asking for a piece of land at Warea (Taranaki). Sir George Grey refers her letter to Ministers, minuting that he "has been told" (he does not say by whom) "that her claim was good."

3. On 19th January, 1867, the above letter was referred to Mr. Parris, Commissioner at Taranaki.

4. On 5th February, 1867, Mr. Parris reports that, before the colonization of New Zealand, Louisa's mother was taken prisoner to Waikato, where she had children by a European called Taylor, of whom Louisa is one. That she (the mother) returned to Taranaki during the war in 1864, and lived with the natives near Warea, where Louisa Taylor visited her in October, 1865; and some time in 1866 she came to Arama Karaka's place at Opunake, and lived there in 1867. He considers her claim is "of the same value as absentee claims generally, and entitled to the same consideration, unless it be made a special case," but he gives no reason why it should be so. On this report of Mr. Parris, Mr. Rolleston writes, suggesting that 25 acres, apart from her relations, would be of very little use to this woman. (It does not appear how the limit of 25 acres had been arrived at). Hon. Mr. Stafford minutes: "Some provision might be made on a native reserve for this woman."

5. On 30th April, 1867, Louisa again appeals to Sir George Grey, at Auckland, reminding him of her previous note written from Tauranga. On this letter there is a minute by Mr. James Mackay, apparently in some official capacity, stating that "he has heard" (he does not say from whom) "that her claims are of value: that it is a mistake to say she has not occupied *the land*, for her mother was living on it till lately, and he understands (not saying from whom) "that Louisa lived there also." Mr. Rolleston minutes that the case must be treated as that of other absentees when Mr. Parris enters on the settlement of those claims. Ultimately, on 18th May, 1867, the letter, with minutes, is referred to Mr. Parris.

6. On 30th May, 1867, Louisa writes to the Government at Wellington that she has seen the Governor, Sir George Grey, and spoken to him; that he said, "it was all good, and that Mr. Mackay was to give her some land." Mr. Mackay minutes on this letter "he laid her case before the Governor, and that he instructed him to see that she got some land or compensation."

7. On 13th July, 1867, Mr. Parris minutes on above "that her claim as an absentee will be attended to when tranquillity prevails in the Taranaki District. If the Government authorizes a special award it can be done at the same time as other special cases."

8. On 5th August, 1867, she writes again to Sir George Grey to the same effect as before. On 26th August, Hon. Mr. Richmond, Native Minister, minutes: "Request Mr. Parris to make a small reserve for Ruiha at or near Warea." Letter to Mr. Parris was accordingly written by Mr. Rolleston, Under-Secretary, and one to Louisa Taylor, informing her that "Mr. Parris had been instructed to make a small reserve at Warea, or near it, for her." On 13th September Mr. Parris acknowledges letter from Under-Secretary without remark.