

River and the sea. Bounded on the north by Cook's run, and south by boundary of Awahou Block."

297. Did Mr. Alexander McDonald act for Dr. Featherston in the distribution of any of these moneys?—To the best of my belief he did.

298. Have you any document showing that McDonald was acting for the Natives in this matter?—There are letters of the 23rd and 27th February, 1869, addressed to Mr. Richmond, in which the principal Natives agree that Dr. Featherston and Mr. Alexander McDonald shall pay the money to them—that is, to the three tribes.

To Mr. Richmond.

Otaki, 23rd February, 1869.

FRIEND, salutations. We, the Ngatiraukawa, have assembled together to consider what is to be done with respect to the Rangitikei rents, which were impounded by the Superintendent of the Province of Wellington in the year 1864.

We have heard that the Government have fully determined to pay the money for the leases into our hands—namely, to the non-sellers and to the sellers—and we have consented to the determination that the Government have come to with respect to that money. However, what we wish is that the Government should make a correct division of that money: Ngatiraukawa, together with Hoani Meihana and some of the members of the Rangitane Tribe, to receive the same amount as the Ngatiapa, with Peeti and some other of the members of the Rangitane Tribe.

However, our reason for consenting to this disposition of the money is that the difficulty may be soon settled, and Maori disputes regarding it done away with; but the main reason for our consenting has been overlooked since before the disputes which occurred before the sale of the land; but our only reason for agreeing now is that the difficulties should cease. We have authorized Mr. Alexander McDonald to receive the portion of the money to which the Ngatiraukawa are entitled, and to hand it to them. Dr. Featherston can pay the Ngatiapa the amount to which they are entitled.

MATENE TE WHIWHI and Others.

27th February, 1869.

THIS is a letter from Tapa te Whatatupari, of the Ngatikauwhata, in respect of the money, expressing a hope that it may be equally divided, one-half for Ngatiapa and Rangitane and one-half for Ngatiraukawa, and that Dr. Featherston and Alick McDonald hand over this money to us and the three tribes.

TAPA TE WHATATUPARI and Others.

299. You referred to a letter just now that had been addressed to Mr. Richmond?—Yes. The concluding portion of that letter is, "We have authorized Mr. A. McDonald to receive the portion of the money to which the Ngatiraukawa are entitled, and to hand it to them. Dr. Featherston can pay the Ngatiapa the amount to which they are entitled."

300. That letter is signed by many Maoris?—Yes.

301. Have you the original letter?—Yes; I produce original letter.

302. Will you point out the signature of Parakaia?—It is there [pointing to the signature].

FRIDAY, 7th AUGUST, 1885.

Mr. T. W. LEWIS examined (continued from the 6th August).

303. *Mr. Te Ao.*] When Dr. Featherston impounded the rents did he not make a promise that they would eventually be returned to the Natives?—I believe so. There is no distinct record to be found on that subject, but it has been generally accepted that such a promise was made.

304. Was Dr. Featherston the accredited agent of the Government at that time?—Yes, for the purchase of this land. I believe that at that time land-purchasing was conducted by the Superintendents of the different provinces.

305. Seeing that Dr. Featherston made a promise to give back this money as Superintendent and agent of the Government, how is it that that promise was not carried out?—In a letter from Dr. Featherston to the Government he stated that he had carried out that promise, and that the money had been paid.

306. Does his letter prove that the money was paid to the owners of the land?—Here is the letter itself: the Committee can judge. [Letter read.] The letter is No. 6 of the papers, and is dated the 5th of November, 1869, from Wellington. It is printed in the papers of the Legislative Council relating to the Himatangi back rents, 1881.

307. Does that letter show that any portion of the money was paid to any of the Himatangi Natives? [*Colonel Trimble:* The letter has been put in. It has been referred to several times. I do not see what we want with Mr. Lewis's views in the matter.] Has it been shown—I will put it this way—that money was paid to any of the Himatangi Natives?—Not specifically.

308. *Mr. Bryce.*] In that letter?—Not specifically.

309. But Mr. Te Ao asks his question in a wider sense, I would ask the same question, not confining yourself to that letter at all. I ask you if you know whether money was paid to any of the Himatangi Natives?—Mr. Te Ao, I think, refers to a return which was asked for by the Legislative Council in 1881 of the names of the Natives who were declared by the Native Land Court to be owners of the Himatangi Block, with notes showing which of them had signed receipts for rents. Search was made, but no receipts from these specific Natives were found. Considering, however, the way in which the money was distributed in respect of the rents, the absence of receipts from the Natives does not enable me to say whether they got the money or not. In continuation of that answer, I would state that Mr. A. McDonald, who knew all about the matter, and was on the spot, in the letter before referred to states that the distribution of rent reached generally those who were entitled to receive it. Reading together portions of Mr. McDonald's letter to myself and the letter signed by Parakaia to Mr. Richmond, it would seem that all Dr. Featherston was expected to do was to pay over proportions of the rents to certain persons, leaving the Natives to divide their individual shares. Mr. McDonald further remarks that he never saw the Himatangi lease to Captain Robinson; but he always understood that the lessors, sellers and non-sellers, received the share of the rents allotted to them by the rest of the Ngatiraukawa Tribe.

310. *Mr. Te Ao.*] What money was it that he alludes to, and which was paid to Ngatiraukawa?—I cannot answer as to details. I have no further information as to the distribution of the rents than is printed in the papers before the Committee.

311. Was not McDonald's position this: that he was acting on behalf of the Ngatikaupara—that is, with regard to the Manawatu and Rangitikei Block?—I am not able to say what Mr.