

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 10TH MARCH, 1896.

MEIHA KEEPA examined.

1. *Sir Walter Buller.*] What tribes do you claim to represent as chief?—The Muaupoko, Rangitane, Wanganui, Ngararau, and others.
2. Where do you live?—At present in Wanganui; formerly at Horowhenua.
3. You know the Horowhenua Block, the subject of the present inquiry?—Yes; I have already related all about the land, and the names, &c., before other Courts.
4. Do you remember the investigation before the Native Land Court in 1873?—Yes; I recollect that; but I recollect the year before that, the Ngatihua and others were claimants; that was in Foxton.
5. Before what Judges?—Judges Rogan and Smith.
6. Who was the Assessor?—Takarangi.
7. And the block was before that Court?—Yes; from the Kukutauaki River to Manawatu. In the Court that sat in 1873 I gave the genealogy of the tribes.
8. Did you take any active part in the investigation before those Courts?—Yes, I was conducting the case.
9. What was the nature of the decision arrived at by the Court in 1873 in regard to the Horowhenua Block?—The Court fixed the boundary at Waiwiri right up to the ranges.
10. From the mouth of the creek or thereabouts?—The other side of the mouth in a line to the summit of the ranges.
11. Speaking generally, where was the northern boundary?—It was placed at Waiaraua, and right away up to the top of the ranges. These were the broad limits laid down by the Court.
12. To whom did the Court award this block?—To the Muaupoko.
13. Do you recognise the boundaries on the map on the wall of the Court?—Yes; but they have been enlarged since by my own good will.
14. In what way?—Some of the Ngatihua objected to the boundaries. The block had been already awarded to the Muaupoko; there was a gathering of the Ngatihua at Otaki amounting to about forty.
15. Was that before or after?—It was after the Court came to its decision.
16. What part did you take in it?—The Ngatihua said to me, “We have come to see you about the matter; if you go to cut the lines on this boundary we will fire at you.” One of the Ngatihua said that. Then Wireti got up, and he said, “We second what has been said; if you go to cut these lines we will fire at you.” Four people got up and made the same statement, and then I got up to reply. I said, “I am the Major-General; my name before this was Major Kemp. Now you have said you will fire and shoot. Major Kemp will become a General. In consequence of what you have said, it gives me more strength, and to-morrow I am going.” The Ngatihua then all went back to a man. A horse was given to me to ride to Horowhenua, and I came to a village just over here. Te Waiata and I stayed there. The men gathered round me, but I said nothing to them. I slept there, and next morning I spoke to Kingi, Hori, and Pene. I said, “Render to Cæsar that which is Cæsar’s.” I said, “Let us all go to Waiouo.” I said to Hoani, who is present in Court, “You go through to the Ngatihua, and tell them at their kainga that I am here, and they had better come along to where I am with their guns.” I went on by the beach road, and Hoani went by the inland track. The Muaupoko were very dark in consequence of what I told them to remain behind. Rewiri and others came after me, and I said, “Go back;” but they would not listen, and came on. I went to Waiouo, and I waited for the Ngatihua. Then I said, “Here is the chain; take it from my hand if you can.” Wireti said, “It is war, but there is no war; there are guns, but there is no discharge. Go and survey the line.” In consequence of his acting like this there was no more trouble, and I brought back the line to Waingaio.
17. That had the effect of reducing the area?—Yes.
18. Did you report what you had done to the Court to have it given effect to?—No; the Court had gone.
19. When was that line fixed? Where did the Court sit?—I forget. There was a dispute about the Waingaio line. Afterwards, a surveyor, sent by Sir Donald McLean, was turned off by the Natives.
20. Can you give a history of what took place?—McLean came to me first to try to get me round before that, but I refused to listen to him.
21. When did he come first to talk about it; was it before or after the Court declared this to be Muaupoko country?—Before. He had been to me before the Court pronounced anything, because he had given a lot of money to the Ngatihua for flour and other things, and that annoyed me, because he had given that money on purpose to create a disturbance about the land.
22. Why did it annoy you?—Because it was done to purchase the land.
23. What happened in consequence of your being angry?—I stopped the sale of the land, and it was agreed that it should be brought before the Court; and the Ngatiraukawa put in a claim, and I was the counter-claimant. I was the first who had anything to say about it in the Court.
24. That was the first that led to the case coming into the Court?—Yes.