

OTAKI, TUESDAY, 6TH JUNE, 1905.

*Mr. Stafford* : Your Honour, I represent on this occasion the whole of the descendants of the Ngatiraukawa, who were some of the donors of the Porirua land, and who were the entire donors of the Otaki reserves. I informed the Commission that I had endeavoured to formulate the wishes of those I represent so as to place those wishes before the Commission in order to shorten as far as possible the sitting. I have formulated those wishes from instructions which I had given me by some of my clients. But those present here wish that I should confer with them so that they might be made fully conversant—the whole of them—with what is supposed to be their wishes, before placing these before the Commission. It is possible that there may be some dissentients—not from the Ngatiraukawas—but possibly from the Ngatitoas, and I would ask the Commission, under the circumstances and because I think it will tend to shorten the sitting, if they would permit an adjournment for the afternoon in order that I might confer with the whole of those interested. I ask, therefore, if the Commission will grant me this concession. I feel sure that it may reduce (if there be dissentients) the number of them.

*Mr. Wi Parata* : I should like to say a few words. I should like to point out that I do not wish the inquiry into the Porirua trust to be mixed up with that into the Otaki trusts; I wish them kept separate, because if you take them together it will cause delay and prolong the proceedings. Another matter I wish to bring before you. It is the Parliament that has authorised the Commission to inquire into these matters, and therefore I take it the Government should find a lawyer for the Natives, to appear for them before the Commission. If the Parliament has any consideration for the Natives, they should appoint some one to appear for them as counsel. This Commission is to inquire into these trusts and to report on the matters—as to funds, the expenditure thereof, and so on. I should like to point out that the Maoris gave the land, then the Europeans made a Crown grant to take the land away from them, and I want to know which of this is wrong. The land was given by the Maoris in the presence of all the people, but the Crown grant was issued unknown to the donors of the land. It was done in secret. I ask, therefore, that the inquiry into Whitereia should be kept separate from that into Otaki, so that the two should not be confounded. It may be it would shorten the proceedings.

*Mr. Quick* : Do we understand that the Ngatitoas are as a whole not represented?

*Mr. Wi Parata* : That is so.

*Mr. Stafford* : I have said I represent some of the Ngatitoas, and I believe I represent the whole, perhaps, except Wi Parata. It might be well to ascertain whether Wi Parata's objection is to the carrying-out of any educational scheme at all, or whether it is not grounded in the desire that the donors should get back the land: as to whether he is in favour of carrying out a scheme for the future management of the trusts, or whether his objection, if there be one, is not based on the fact that he desires the land to be given back to the donors.

*Mr. Wi Parata* (in answer to the Commissioners) : I have not made any application to the Government on the matter. I only got notice of the Commission intending to sit at Otaki last Thursday. I was informed of it by wire from Mr. Field in Wellington.

*The Chairman* : But you have known for some time there was to be a Commission?

*Mr. Wi Parata* : The first time I knew it was coming to Otaki was by wire. I waited to see what the Commission was about, and what it was going to do. I am not going to employ a lawyer; I want the Government to do so. I am not competent to go into all the phases of the law in regard to Crown grants.

*The Chairman* : We are quite clear that there is nothing in the Commission which would justify us in going into the matter with a view to recommending the Crown to set aside the grant. All we can do is to inquire into matters which are relevant to the application of the land and the funds which have been accumulated. We cannot entertain any notion about your not being represented by a lawyer. We cannot make any representations to the Government about not having one. In regard to the separation of the inquiries, we cannot separate them. We must go into the matter in any way that is convenient. If we find it convenient to go into both at the same time we shall do so whenever or wherever it is convenient. We are willing to hear anything you say, and if there is any legal difficulty we may be able to help you.

OTAKI, WEDNESDAY, 7TH JUNE, 1905.

*The Chairman* : Mr. Stafford, will you give us any information you can about this matter?

*Mr. Stafford* : In the first place, I submit to the Commissioners what I call, for purposes of convenience, a scheme for the future administration which my clients think should take place with reference to both the Porirua and Otaki reserves. Both reserves are granted upon identically the same trusts, and the Natives say that, as the purpose of the Porirua trust has never been performed, and as the land at Otaki is practically now a failure—that is, the mission scheme—inasmuch as there are very few Native scholars who attend the school at all, the two estates should be combined into one. The system they suggest in this statement will show at once what course they suggest should be taken. In substance, the statement is this: that as it is admitted on all sides, apparently, that no school can be established at Porirua, Otaki is the spot on which the school should be established. They altogether deprecate the idea of the utilisation of those funds towards the Wairarapa.

*The Chairman* : What is their particular objection to that?

*Mr. Stafford* : They say that the Natives on the West Coast will not attend that school. The school is established in the neighbourhood of the tribe which was conquered by the donating tribes, and they say it is against their custom and it is hopeless to expect the West Coast Natives to send their children to that school.

*The Chairman* : Do you understand it is offensive to their pride?