

in possession under the Natives. This might have put a different face on the apparent inaction of the Natives in the matter.

It is pretty conclusive that the real explanation of the whole matter is that Aorangi was dealt with by the officers of the Crown or the provincial authorities on a mistaken assumption that it had duly passed to the Crown by effective deeds of sale.

Dated the 20th day of October, 1920.

R. N. JONES,  
JOHN STRAUCHON, } Commissioners.  
JOHN ORSMBY, }

To His Excellency the Governor-General of New Zealand.

### REPORT No. 3.

#### PUKETITIRI AND WHANGANUI-O-ROTU.

##### PUKETITIRI.

THIS is a claim to a piece of land known as Section 98, Block XIV, Pohui Survey District, and said to contain 508 acres, which the Natives allege is either identical with or represents the reserve referred to in the next paragraph.

The claim has its origin in a deed dated the 17th November, 1851, by which a large tract of country called Ahuriri was assured to the Crown. Certain reserves were provided for, including the following: "The third: 500 acres at the place called Puketitiri, with a right to snare birds throughout the whole of the Puketitiri Bush." Apparently nothing was done at that time towards defining the reserve except by marking a reference to its approximate position on the map. An attempt was made to define it in the year 1860, and on the 8th March, 1860, Mr. Commissioner Cooper reports the result: "I endeavoured to have the 500-acres reserve at Puketitiri marked off as agreed upon at the first purchase, but finding that the Natives wanted to get not only nearly the whole bush, but the best part of Mr. Dyson's run and all his improvements into the bargain, I declined to proceed in the matter, and left the Natives half-way under the impression that they would get no land at all there."

Again, on the 20th June, 1861, in response to a circular letter of the 20th May asking that any disputes with regard to reserves should be reported on with the cause or ground of dispute, Mr. Cooper writes: "The Puketitiri Reserve (in the Ahuriri Block) still remains unsettled. The Natives will not accept the 500 acres named in the deed, nor will three times that quantity satisfy them. I have asked the Provincial Government to withhold from sale all lands within the questionable limits until something is settled. If they would sell their rights to this bush, which is valuable, it would be the simplest way of getting rid of the difficulty." In a general return dated the 23rd January, 1862, regarding reserves for Natives, Puketitiri is mentioned as "No. 5 on map."

The next reference is another report by Mr. Cooper, of the 26th August, 1867, in which he speaks of Puketitiri (among other reserves) as having been sold to the Crown.

In a list of Native reserves published in 1871 Puketitiri appears, and under the heading "Grantee or Owners" appears "the Crown." This must refer to the party in whom the legal estate was presumed to be vested, because if it were Crown land free from a reserve it would not have been included in the return.

In Koch's map of the Hawke's Bay Province, published in 1874, there is marked a Native reserve in about the position that Puketitiri might be supposed to be.

In the years 1906 and 1907, the adjoining land having in the meantime been cut up, the land referred to, containing 508 acres, was permanently reserved as a forest reserve, and it is still in the hands of the Government.