

The position, shortly, is that the Reureu Block, of which Reureu Nos. 2 and 3 are a part, was one of the reserves made on the purchase of the Rangitikei Manawatu Block by the Crown. There were at the time living on this reserve section of the N'Pikiahū, N'Waewae, N'Rangitahi, and N'Maniapoto. These hapus had no ancestral right to the land, but had simply been squatting there for many years and refused to move, and it was decided to make an award of about 4,400 acres to them.

In January, 1888, the Native Land Court was, by Order in Council, empowered to ascertain the ownership of the reserve and at a sitting of the Court at Marton in December, 1895, it gave effect to an agreement making a division between the hapus as follows:—

Reureu No. 1 for N'Pikiahū and N'Waewae	..	..	2,270 acres.
Reureu No. 2 for N'Rangitahi and N'Maniapoto	..	..	1,700 acres.

It ascertained the owners for each division and made orders accordingly.

This decision was appealed against, and the Appellate Court on the 9th December, 1896, after an exhaustive inquiry, made orders as follows:—

Reureu No. 1: N'Pikiahū and N'Waewae	..	..	2,546 acres.
Reureu No. 2: N'Rangitahi and N'Maniapoto	..	..	1,033 acres.
Reureu No. 3: N'Rangitahi and N'Maniapoto	..	..	517 acres.

Before both the Native Land Court and the Appellate Court the lists affecting Nos. 2 and 3 were scrutinized with great care. These lists have remained undisturbed until the present time, and it seems to me that a great deal more evidence is required than that adduced at the inquiry at Marton to prove that a mistake has been made and that persons who have a right have been omitted from the titles.

(Sgd.) JAS. W. BROWNE, Judge.

[Extract from M.B. 96, folios 106–108, Marton. 24/9/34. Jas. W. Browne.]

808. REUREU NOS. 2 AND 3: REFERENCE BY CHIEF JUDGE TO COURT WITH REGARD TO PETITION OF ROKA MEREHANA AND OTHERS.

Inquiry by Court. Petition read.

Taite te Tomo.—I am appearing for the petitioners and will give evidence in support of the petition.

No one present in Court opposed the petition.

Taite te Tomo (sworn).—Roka Merehana, the petitioner, is dead, but I will repeat the statement made by her to me regarding this matter.

In 1840 one called Wiremu Pukapuka first brought her on to this land—she was one of the rangatiras of Ngati-Maniapoto and Ngati-Rangitahi and Ngati-Matakore. She told us that when this land was returned to the Maoris that Wiremu Pukapuka and his wife Mereaina, *alias* Rangitoto, were both put into the block. Since then up to the sitting of the Court in 1912 she had always thought that the two were in the block. It was during that Court she discovered that they were not in—she verified this subsequently when I read out the lists at a later inquiry. The position was not made any better for her owing to the fact that she was not able to read. Roka Merehana was related to both Wiremu Pukapuka and his wife, Mereaina, and was their adopted child. Wiremu Pukapuka died shortly after 1844, but his wife Mereaina did not die until 1905.

I was instrumental in making it known to Roka in 1926 that neither Wiremu Pukapuka nor his wife were in the lists—Roka herself was an owner. Neither Wiremu Pukapuka nor Mereaina had any issue. It was in 1926 that Roka discovered that some of the owners had two shares others one and a half and others one—she was always under the impression that they had all shared alike—viz., Ngati-Maniapoto, Ngati-Rangitahi, and Ngati-Matakore. I came to the conclusion that her grievance was well founded and I got my wife Ngahuia who holds two shares to sign the petition—it may be that a portion of the two shares belong to Roka. Roka was awarded one share only.

There was another person, Pepene Tahatika, whose name is not in the present list, although he contends he was in the first one. He belonged to Ngati-Maniapoto. He was one of the persons who resided on Te Reureu in the same manner as Wiremu Pukapuka and his wife. Pepene Tahatika is dead, but his descendants are still alive. It is through ignorance that no previous application has been made for his inclusion in the list. His descendants are living in Waikato. One of them in 1915 came down to look at his interest. He was handed £30 by Hamapiri, but he told Hamapiri he did not want the money. He wanted his land.

That is all Roka told me. It is the desire of the petitioners that a Court be set up to go into the question of the shares.

Inquiry closed.

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