

Title Page

Report of the Public Petitions Committee on the Petition of Thirteen Natives Owning Land at the Thames Gold Fields, Praying that there May be no Diminution in the Fees for Miners' Rights, which Fees They Claim under an Arrangement with Mr. Mackay. Brought Up 3rd August, 1869, and Ordered to be Translated into Maori and Printed. Wellington.

THE Petitioners, thirteen aboriginal natives, seem to complain against the leasing of lands which has lately been brought into operation by a Proclamation of the Superintendent of the Province of Auckland with reference to the Thames Gold Fields.

The Petitioners appear to imagine that they will receive less money under the leasing system than they would receive under the system known as claims held under miners' rights.

The Committee have examined the printed agreement entered into by the Petitioners with Mr. Mackay, the Civil Commissioner, and they have compared it with the Leasing Regulations proclaimed, and they fail to discover how there can be any real grounds for the apprehensions expressed in the Petition.

Under the system in force in respect to miners' rights, the Native proprietors receive from the Government Agent a fee of £1 sterling per annum for every plat of ground on a quartz reef, running lengthways across the supposed direction of the reef, measuring 300 feet by 50 feet.

Under the leasing system the lessee is compelled, in addition to the fee of £1 per annum on the whole claim, to expend not less than £100 sterling per annum in labour upon every plat of ground of the dimensions above specified. Now supposing that labourers' wages on the gold fields are 6s. 6d. per diem, or £101 8s. per annum, the £100 above mentioned represents, in round numbers, one man, who is obliged to pay a fee of £1 per annum to the Government Agent, to secure a miners' right. If labour on the Thames Gold Fields should become dearer—a very improbable contingency—then the amount of fees which the Native proprietors would receive would be diminished under the leasing system. If, on the other hand, labour should become cheaper—a highly probable contingency—the fees which the Native proprietors would receive would be increased. Moreover, under the leasing system a plat of ground which from its dimensions would be held under eight miners' rights, and thus produce to the Native proprietors only £8 sterling per annum, might, if leased to a company, afford employment to fifty miners, whose fees would amount to £50, in addition to the £1 paid by the Company on the whole claim, and thus the Native proprietors would be gainers under the leasing system in the proportion of £51 to £8 per annum.

I am directed to report that if the substance of this Report was honestly and fairly explained to the Petitioners, the Committee are of opinion that the apprehensions of the Petitioners might be removed.

J. CRACROFT WILSON, C.B., Chairman.
3rd August, 1869.

[Translation.] HE KUPU TENEI NA TE KOMITI KUA TURIA HEI WHAKAAROARO I NGA RITENGA O NGA PUKAPUKA INOI E TUKUA MAI ANA KI TE RUNANGA NUI, MO RUNGA I TE PUKAPUKA INOI O NGA TANGATA 13, E WHAI TAKE ANA KI TETAHI WHENUA I HAURAKI, I TE WHENUA KOURA; E INOI ANA RATOU KIA KAUA E WHAKAITIA NGA MONI O NGA MAINARAITI, E KI ANA HOKI RATOU I WHAKARITEA E RATOU KO TE MAKE TE RITENGA MO AUA MONI.

E WHAKAHE ana nga kai inoi, he tangata Maori anake, 13 ratou, mo te riihitanga o nga whenua i te whenua koura i Hauraki i runga i te Panui o Te Huparitene o Akarana.

E whakaaro ana nga kai inoi ka iti iho te moni ma ratou i runga i te ritenga riihi, i te moni e puta ana ki a ratou i runga i te ritenga o te mainaraiti.

Kua ata tiroirohia e Te Komiti te pukapuka whakaaetanga, kua oti nei te ta ki te perehi, i tuhia e nga kai inoi, e Te Make Komihana hoki, a kua ata whakariteritea ki nga Ture Whakahaere mo nga riihi kua oti na te Panui, a kahore i kitea e Te Komiti he take tika mo te pouri o nga kai inoi i whakaaturia mai roto i to ratou Pukapuka inoi ki te Runanga Nui.

I runga i te ritenga e mau nei mo nga mainaraiti e utua ana e Te Kaiwhakahaere Tikanga o te Kawanatanga te pauna moni kotahi (£1) i ia tau, mo te piihi whenua i runga i te toka Kiripaka e tapahi ana i runga i taua toka Kiripaka tona roa e 300 putu tona whanui e 50 putu.

I runga i te ritenga riihi e tonoa ana ki te tangata e riihi ana kia apititia ki te £1 mo te tau kua utua e ia, nga moni kua e iti iho i te £100 pauna moni i te tau mo nga kai mahi e whakanohoia ana ki runga ki ia piihi whenua e tae ana tona nui ki tera i whakaaturia i runga nei. Na, mehemea e ono hereni me te hikipene i te ra te utu mo te kai mahi i runga i te whenua koura, ara £101 8 i te tau, ko taua £100 pauna ra te utu mo te tangata kotahi, e utu ana ia ki Te Kaiwhakahaere tikanga o Te Kawanatanga te £1 i te tau kia pumau ai tana mainaraiti. Mehemea ka nui haere te utu mo nga tangata kaimahi, otira e whakaarohia ana ekore e nui haere, katahi ka nekeneke iho nga moni e riro ana i nga Maori i runga i te ritenga riihi; a kitea ka iti haere te utu mo nga tangata kai mahi, e whakaarohia ana ka iti haere, katahi ka neke atu nga moni e riro i nga tangata Maori no ratou te whenua. Na hoki, mehemea ka tukua tetahi whenua e puritia ana e te pakeha i runga i nga mainaraiti e 8, heoi ano te moni i runga i aua mainaraiti e £8 i te tau, mehemea ra e tukua ana taua whenua ki tetahi huihuinga tangata i runga i te riihi e whakanohoia nga kai keru koura e rima tekau ki runga ka tae nga moni e utua ana e ratou ki te £50 i te tau apititia hoki ki te £1 e utua ana mo te piihi katoa; heoi, i runga i te ritenga riihi ka nui atu te moni e puta ki nga tangata Maori, i te moni e puta ana i runga i nga mainaraiti, e penei ana hoki te ritenga, i runga i te riihi e £51, i te mainaraiti e £8.

Kua whakahaua ahau kia whakaputaina e ahau tenei ki ara, mehemea ka ata whakamaramatia tikatia, paitia hoki nga kupu o runga atu nei ki nga kai inoi, e whakaaro ana Te Komiti ka kore rawa to ratou pouri.

J. Cracroft Wilson,
Tumuaki o Te Komiti.