

Kaingaroa Forest

KAINGAROA FOREST – ANOTHER BOGUS TREATY CLAIM

By Ross Baker, Researcher, One New Zealand Foundation Inc.

As the Te Roroa claim at Maunganui Bluff, the Government has no evidence that the Central North Island Collective tribes have any “real” claim to the Kaingaroa Forest.

Documented evidence shows this land was purchased by the Crown on a “willing seller/willing buyer” basis in 1880. The Crown agreed to a funding cap of \$2.6 million in February 2008 for the “Collective” to satisfy the Crown, *“that there was ample evidence that the Crown’s actions and omissions towards the iwi, breached the Treaty of Waitangi”*. From the letters below, the Crown did very little, if any research to substantiate this claim, before agreeing to return one of New Zealand’s most valuable assets, the Kaingaroa State Forest, to one small group of New Zealand Citizens.

It was found in the 1850/60’s, the Kaingaroa Plains were uneconomical for planting in pasture and grazing stock, as it lacked the mineral cobalt and the stock became ill with **“bush sickness”**. The only use for this vast area of land, was to grow Radiata Pine trees but the cost to plant it in trees and wait 25 years for a return, could only be achieved by the Government. It was decided by both parties for the Crown to purchase the land, which would give the Maori owners instant cash to develop their other lands or purchase more fertile land and would create hundreds of jobs for them and others over future years in planting, maintaining and milling the forests. The Crown paid 15,000 pounds for the 120,000 acres, a good price for very poor land at the time. **Since this time, the people of New Zealand have planted, maintained and milled millions and millions of trees in this forest to create one of the largest man made forest in the world for present and**

future New Zealanders to enjoy and reap the benefits. (Refer, *"Why the Kaingaroa Forest isn't grassland"* by Miles Baker)

On the 1 April 2008, The One New Zealand Foundation Inc researcher, Ross Baker wrote to the Minister in Charge of Treaty Negotiations, the Hon Dr Michael Cullen asking him for an update on the negotiations between the Crown and the Central North Island Collective (the majority of iwi with interests in the Kaingaroa Forest) on the settlements of their Treaty of Waitangi claim.

On the 23 April 2008, the Minister replied, ***"I received a proposal by the Collective which sets out the process by which they have the majority of licensed Crown forest land in the central North Island returned to them. I am satisfied that there is ample evidence that Crown actions and omissions towards the iwi represented by the Collective breaches the Treaty of Waitangi. It is for that reason that the Government is prepared to enter discussions with the Collective in the relation to the settlement of their historic claim"***. (No mention of forests in the Tiriti o Waitangi)

On the 15 July 2008, Ross Baker again wrote to the Minister informing him that from the evidence the One New Zealand Foundation had, the Kaingaroa Plains were sold "legally and morally" to the Crown in 1880 on a "willing seller/willing buyer" basis. The tribes involved at the time of the sale were completely satisfied with the lands sold and monies received, which they then shared amongst themselves. Under the Official Information Act, the Foundation then asked ***"What was the supposed injustice/s associated with this sale that have led the Crown paying out \$500 million of taxpayer money to the tribes?"***

On the 15 October 2008, the One New Zealand Foundation received the following reply from the Minister. ***“I am writing to inform you that your request under the Official Information Act 1982 is not specific enough and that your request is being refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982 as the document alleged to contain the information does not exist. The Government accepts that those Central North Island groups covered by the Collective settlement over the Central North Island Crown Forest License lands, have legitimate claims against the Crown, and that it is appropriate that the Kaingaroa Forest be returned through that settlement as redress for those claims”.***

The Crown states, ***“Our request is not specific enough, therefore refused our request”*** but then states, ***“The document alleged to contain the information does not exist”***. The fact is, the Crown has no documented evidence to substantiate, ***“the supposed injustice/s associated with this sale that have led to the Crown paying out \$500 million of taxpayer’s money to the tribes, or to the Central North Island groups legitimate claims against the Crown”***.

On the 20 August 2008, the One New Zealand Foundation wrote to the Minister asking him, under the Official Information Act for, ***“A copy of the Kaingaroa Land Sale Agreement and Deed between Chief Peraniko and the Crown in 1880”***. On the 12 September 2008, the Minister sent a copy of the “legal” Sale Agreement and Deed showing, ***“the Kaingaroa plains were “legally and morally” purchased by the Crown on a, “willing seller/willing buyer” basis on the 8 December 1880”***.

From the written and verified account by Captain Gilbert Mair below, the old Chief Peraniko, who had died two years before Captain Mair could return to Galetea to pay him and his tribes for the Kaingaroa Plains, **“was exhumed for the *grand occasion*”**. From the gifts offered to Captain Mair and other Crown officials present, there is no denying, the tribes at the time were completely satisfied with the land sold and the monies received. This article from Captain Gilbert Mair, who negotiated the purchase and paid the money, was sent to the Hon Dr Michael Cullen, but he completely ignored it!!

As all the evidence shows this land was purchased on a **“willing seller/willing buyer”** basis, why is the Crown returning one of our most valuable assets, the Kaingaroa State Forest to the Central North Island Collective tribes, when the information to substantiate this claim, as the Te Roroa claim and possibly many others, **“*does not exist*”** and never has??

The End.

KAINGAROA – ITS PASSING TO THE CROWN

CHIEF PERANIKO’S BODY EXHUMED TO RECEIVE PAYMENT

The letter below from Captain Gilbert Mair gives the authenticity of, **“Kaingaroa – Its passing to the Crown in 1879”**, which follows.

Tauranga.

February 26, 1923

My Dear Mr Goudie,

I hope you will live long enough to see Kaingaroa grow as I prophesy into one of the finest artificial forests in the Dominion, and trust that in time it will be extended north easterly to the Rangitaiki River where the land though more broken, with probably much deeper deposit of ash of clinker, effected from Tarawera in 1866 was, as I first remember it, infinitely better soil.

I am enclosing you a couple of copies of an article entitled, "Kaingaroa, Its Passing to the Crown", which I wrote for the Auckland Star Supplement. I had to cut out a quantity of the legendary parts being confined to single column article. The Star proprietors allowed me three columns on their account of the unique function therein detail, "The Resumption of Peraniko".

No such honour has ever been paid to another European. A personal tribute of affection, resulting from joint services in the field and unremitting kindness and consideration offered cheerfully and willingly in so far as in one law.

I attach a second article relating to the "The Preservation Properties of Pumice" of which I have seen many instances.

With all good wishes and down with the mischievous deer

Faithfully Yours,

Gilbert Mair.

(The ONZF has on file a copy of the original hand written letter and article from Gilbert Mair).

KAINGAROA –ITS PASSING TO THE CROWN

"THE STORY OF PERANIKO'S TANGI"

(By Capt. Gilbert Mair NZC)

The great prairie of the North Island, the Kaingaroa Plain, extending for nearly a hundred miles north and south, is not without its folk-lore and history for all its unpeopled and monotonous character. Its story goes far back into the centuries; it is six hundred years since the wizard-like Ngatoro-i – rangi, the high Priest of the Arawa canoe, explored this broad backbone of the island and bestowed place names as far south as the great volcanoes of the Tongariro Country.

Some day the whole of this vast level expanse of territory will be put to profitable use: already the northern and western part becoming a new forest.

Our State Forest Service has already planted many millions of choice trees, which are showing phenomenal growth, Kaingaroa bids to become the most famous artificial forest in the Dominion and will require a special railway line to convey the timber output to market.

From time immemorial, the Kaingaroa prairie has been claimed and used for bird hunting by numerous aboriginal tribes bearing the euphonious names of Te Kawerau, Ngaiwi, Te Aruhetawiri, Ngararauhemamae Te Heke o Maruiwi, Te Raupongaheohe (the waving bulrushes) Te Turururumouku etc., but they were inoffensive people, and when twelve or thirteen generations ago, the more strenuous warlike descendants of those who arrived in the great canoes came from northward under the leadership of two warriors Manawa Kotokoto and his nephew Wharepakau, the original dwellers were destroyed or driven elsewhere towards the south and the whole of the vast territory became the property of the two small tribes, Ngatimanawa and Ngatiwhare, who through relationship with the Arawa and Urewera tribes became a buffer. This country they were still holding at the execution of the Treaty of Waitangi and when the Maori king was set up in 1860. Ngatimanawa joined the loyal Arawa and the others went into rebellion. The Ngatimanawa became conspicuous on account on their single

hearted devotion to the Crown, fighting against their near relatives and, though never able to place more than half a hundred men in the field, many of the women bore guns with good effect. They did such fine service scouting and fighting and were always in the advance, so they were named, "Mair's Forty Thieves". I was authorised to pay them a bonus of 2/ per diem on the quiet.

In 1820, a taua toto (a blood party) under the renown Hauraki chief Tuterangianini, passed southward over it, intending to attack some of the tribes further on, but the outlook was discouraging, and on viewing the abnormally large cabbage trees which are said to have been planted by Ngatoroirangi to show his two sisters how far he could jump, Tuterangianini named the largest one after a hereditary enemy, cursed it and ordered his warriors to chop it down, then resumed his march homeward quite satisfied with his proof of his prowess. The second tree, though not as large, was such a prominent object on the great level expanse, that when riding or walking it took an interminable time to pass it, hence the travellers averred that it really moved along abreast with them.

There are many names connecting this plain with Ngatoroirangi's famous vestal sisters, Kuiwai and Haungaroa, such as Te Wairapukao, where the women searched all night for their lost kit of kaki (preserved kumura). Te Punatakaki, where Ngatoroirangi caused a spring to burst forth to save his fainting sisters aforesaid, like Moses and the rock.

When walking over Kaingaroa for the first time in 1866, I turned off to view the stump of the tree destroyed by Tuterangianini forty-six years previously. There was a solid rim of green bark about 11ft across, with small trees growing out of it at intervals. The companion tree was cut down by the men engaged in surveying the block in the seventies. Looking southward as you travelled along the Rotorua-Murupara road there is a mound just to the right of the 33 mile peg named, "Te Upoko o Po" (The head of the night). It was densely

covered by convolvulus and wild pigs were always found there in consequence. When viewed from the north fifteen miles away it loomed up like a mountain, yet it was only twelve or fifteen feet above the surrounding level. When I first travelled over Kaingaroa it was deep in Karetu, the native vernal (*Iliroeloe redolens*), and other valuable feed grasses; you could not find a switch to whip your horse. But constant burning off has depreciated the soil seriously, and now it is covered with ti-tree and dracophyllum only.

THE CESSION OF KAINGAROA

Of all the striking episodes in which I have had the good fortune to participate during a long and strenuous life, the buying of Kaingaroa stands out in a stronger light than any other of my official acts. In 1877, the Government having expressed a wish to buy Kaingaroa, I was authorised to carry out the survey, which was done accordingly. The paramount chief of Ngati Manawa, Peraniko Tahawai, guided the surveyor and myself round the boundaries. In 1879 the block, estimated to contain 120,000 acres, was bought before the native land Court, when in spite of bitter opposition from neighbouring tribes, it was finally awarded to the Ngati Manawa, but before I could carry out the purchase, I was appointed Land Purchase Officer at Whanganui.

The affection of my noble and devoted old friend Peraniko was quite a pathetic obsession. Though over 70, he insisted on accompanying me on all my military expeditions, and the moment his quick eye noted suspicious signs of the enemies vicinity he would spring in front and whisper, "No bullet shall harm my tamaiti without passing thought my body first". His good old wife was equally devoted, and two of their children had been baptised Te Mea and Riripeti, (Elizabeth) after my parents.

It was a sad parting when I left for my new sphere of action, as the dear old chief seemed to be dying of tuberculosis. Very soon, very pathetic messages kept arriving from the tribe

employing me to hasten back, while his son-in-law Waretini actually travelled to Wanganui to persuade me to return. He afterwards adopted the name of "Ngawaea" (the telegrams), but I had nine survey parties out in the fields, which it was impossible to leave, and finally news came of Peraniko's death.

I was notified by his people that all funeral ceremonies had be postponed until I could return, and so it came about that my faithful old friend had lain in his grave a years and eleven months ere I was free. I immediately informed the Ngati-Manawa tribe that I would reach Galatea on a certain day, bearing with me the purchased money for Kaingaroa, about 15,000 pounds.

As requested, they sent me my pet orderly, Pani Ahuriri, to meet me at Tauranga. My honoured friend, the late Judge Brabant, had arranged that the payment was to be made in cash, mainly Bank of New Zealand books of 100 single notes and some larger denominations. Owing to leakage, it became known in Tauranga, where there happened to be some undesirable characters, that I was leaving with this large sum of money and the police warned me of the risk. My Maori lad had his calisher and Terry carbine and a revolver, while I carried two heavy Deam and Adams. On reaching Maketu the landlord, Duncan Robertson informed me that three suspicious characters had spent the night there and had been inquiring which road I generally travelled when going to Galatea. So I changed my route and followed the old war trail via Kaiwhatiwhati. Several days afterwards the natives reported having found these three ruffians had been camping in the thick scrub overlooking the narrow crossing Pokario River, evidently waiting for me. I carried the money in a heavy satchel.

On the appointed morning, a mounted escort met us at Ngatamawahine River, informing me that several thousand natives had assembled and I was to be accorded a reception quite unique in modern times, which somewhat aroused my

curiosity, but they would not enlighten me further than that Ngati Manawa had determined to make the function memorable on account of my regard for the old chief.

As we approached Galatea, the scene reminded me of a new goldfield rush; the place was endowed with greenery, flags everywhere; over a hundred tents and marques lined both sides of the marae, with the fine carved house, "Tangiharuru" at the end of the square. Our horses having been taken, we advanced with the escort, ushered in by the firing of volleys, hundred of women waving the white plumes of the kakaho and crying out the ancient welcome, "Haria mai te aroho", etc. (Bring hither the love).

In front of the house knelt the different tribal matuas – solid phalanxes of stripped armed men, who sprang to their feet in rotation and performed the weird thrilling peruperus (war dances) finally coalescing in a body of 800 men in one grand finale. Then the heart-moving strains of the "Tangi" burst forth from over three thousand voices.

THE RESSURECTION ON PERANIKO TAHAWAI

Lifting up my eyes to the front of the carved house, imagine my feelings on being confronted with my deceased friend Peraniko, who had been exhumed from the grave wherein he had laid for two years. The body had been carefully washed; his jet-black hair, which had grown very long, oiled and ornamented with rare plumes of the huia and white crane. He was seated on a high structure plentifully adorned with choice mats, while his cold hand still grasped the family talisman, a greenstone mere. Death had wrought no change, nor was there, the slightest odour. He had always been remarkable during life for his high complexion, rivalling that of a half caste, and it still appeared perfectly natural, except for the slight dark rings under his eyes, which were closed as though asleep. At his feet was the faithful widow bowed in an agony of grief, and the children. Hatless and with bowed head, I stood for

nearly three hours, deeply moved by the affecting strains of the "tangi".

Some of the visitors, less closely related, had resumed their seats and low sympathetic murmurs reached my ears: "Kati ra Kua ea te mate o to matua ka mate koe" ("Cease to mourn, the sorrow for your parent has been assuaged" etc, etc) According to Maori etiquette, I had to assume indignation at these interruptions and speaking sternly I replied, "Who are you that you should dare to measure my tears for my parent".

I then went forward and pressed noses affectionately with the widow and the fatherless ones and hung the leather satchel with the 15,000 pounds about her neck which she retained until it was required for distribution. Mats were laid out in the marae and a seat where I sat and listened to numberless eloquent speeches from notable Maori orators, wherein the virtues of my deceased chief were extolled, also "his great love for me"; that his "mana" was so great that for a long time he had kept the King of Terrors at bay in the hope of meeting me again in the flesh, but as that was not to be, his body had been miraculously preserved, as all present could testify, concluding with the words, "Surely, this should lessen your sorrow". .

Then followed a feast on a gargantuan scale, Tangaroa, the Polynesian Neptune, had been placed under heavy contributions, and all his spoils brought to the marae. The Rangitiki River had given forth its famous eels in great profusion, and Tanemahuta, the Forest God, had unstintingly yielded the feathered creatures of his domain. A number of European traders had their marques full of delicacies of all kinds, silk blouses and all other treasures to tempt the female vanity.

At the conclusion of the feast, hakas and dances were carried on until midnight when I was invited to join a small party of elders to carry my old friend away and buried him temporarily

to await final interment on the sacred mountain Tawhiuau. The following morning I read over the Deed of cession, explaining at great length its irrevocable nature. I reminded the tribe of the ancestral name of Ka-ingaroa (the long enduring home), whereas if they accepted the money I had bought, it would henceforth be called Kainga-poto, (the quickly vanishing wealth). This saying of mine has since become a proverb for all large land sales in the Bay of Plenty.

To facilitate the sale, although the sale had been awarded to 120 persons, it was mutually agreed in open court that only 20 representative persons should be placed on the certificate, each one a representative of his or her relatives of the 120. I strongly urged them to make adequate reserves, and eventually 1700 acres and three small totara bushes were cut out, and it's on one of these that the carved house and largest village now stand.

A select committee was occupied two days and night preparing a scheme of division of the money, they're being no less than eight ancestors who originally claimed the land. The list was read out from time to time till on the third day, consent was unanimous and it was nailed on front of Tangiharuru. Minor lists were made also for the distribution under each of the 20 representatives and apportionment of a thousand pounds for the visitors.

THE GRATITUDE OF THE MAORIS

My friend, Henry Mitchell, the surveyor, and Captain Way, JP, were in attendance, one to mark out the reserves, the other to attest the signatures and payment. We three were seated in the marae watching the division of the money when two of Peraniko's children came forward bearing three split sticks, one with a book containing 100 single bank notes, which he stuck in the ground before me, the others containing 50 pounds each, were given to my two companions. It devolved upon me to act and after discussion with Mr Mitchell, who was well

acquainted with Maori custom, I took a single note from each parcel, and waving these high exclaimed: "You tell us these gifts represent the tears we have shed for our parent Peraniko". I say 'No'. Our tears are not purchasable. They have already been poured out to fertilise the lands of your ancestors which have this day passed for ever to the Queen that it may in future bring forth its fruits in great abundance. As for this money, I have held it in my hands fast, I have consumed it, it now rests in Te Poho-nui- a- Toi (the great stomach of Toi). I then took the money back, which was returned again and again, till I closed the incident by going for a walk. I gave each of my companions a single pound, but the attesting officer looked rather disgusted and considered I had paid far too much importance to native etiquette, but the Maori esteemed me all the more for so doing.

After the purchase money was finally distributed, every owner came singly or in family groups bringing gifts of money. For instance, Peraniko's brother, Rawiri, and his large family were grieved almost to anger because I positively refused their gift of 120 pounds brought to my bedside at midnight, their excuse for coming at such an inopportune hour, they were (whakama) ashamed of the smallness of the token, and feared lest the others would hear of their niggardliness. The total offered gifts must have exceeded 600 pounds.

I mention these incidents to disprove the oft-repeated statement made by ignorant Europeans that the Maori has no such thing as gratitude, or any word representing thanks. Quite a mistake, for when giving a Maori a present he shows his appreciation by his countenance, repeating little, not unmusical, grunts and sounds, muttering, "E toku ariki, nui atu toku, whakawhetai ki akoe. Kia Ora Koe", etc. (O, my lord, great is my aroha for you, may you live forever, etc).

Then again the Maoris are accused of want of constancy – another mistake, for during my long life among them I have seen many instances of the most tender affection existing

between married couples. Quite frequently if one dies, the survivor never remarries. The last and most touching instance of never dying love was shown by dear old widow Ruihi. For eleven long years, regardless of the weather, she came every morning from the village at Awangarara to weep over her husband's grave, and when the tribe removed to their present Kainga, she remained nearby the grave till death claimed her.

Of the thousands of natives then present, probably barely a hundred are still living, and of the many Europeans, who were with me, only two, Mr William Bird of Galatea, and Mr Joe Mc Crae of Taneatua, remain. I have just received letters corroborating the above historic incident.

Captain Gillbert Mair. (NZC)