

New Zealand For Sale Again & Again... Part II

“a source of endless litigation and disagreement between the two races”?

These words were penned by the ‘Protector of Natives’ Rev. George Clarke in 1842. Clarke was referring to the position in law of Maori dispossessed of their lands by conquering iwi, but they have a prophetic ring for New Zealand today. The Waitangi Tribunal has been sitting for 35 years, a bewildering process that to many New Zealanders seems an endless handing over of money, Crown Land and assets to claimants. The ‘Grievance Gravy Train’ perception is widely believed, as over the years, there have been numerous successful claims for land that can be verified as legally sold or already paid for in “Full and Final Settlement” compensation, and documented as such during the 19th and 20th century.

The Waikato Double Compensated

First Time: Tainui’s raupatu (land confiscation) grievance had been voluntarily delayed during the Second World War and in 1946 a grand hui was held at Turangawaewae. Princess Te Puea had agreed that there would be monetary settlement, excluding a ‘land for land’ deal. Tita Wetere attacked the view that “the spiritual loss of the land” could be rectified by money, but he was censured for his stand. The Tainui settlement accorded the iwi £5,000 per annum in perpetuity, and because of the “fine spirit of the people in a time of war,” a payment of £50,000 for the 10 year period since 1936, £5,000 paid forthwith and £1,000 a year for a further 45 years. After this, the Government settled with Whakatohea for a lump sum payment of £20,000.

At the next elections, the Labour Party received the highest percentage ever of Maori support. The only point made by the Parliamentary Opposition was to stress that there should be no elements in the Waikato-Maniapoto Maori Claims Settlement Act “which could lead to future dispute.”

Second Time: The first major Waitangi Tribunal settlement of historical confiscation claims was agreed in 1995. Waikato-Tainui’s claims were settled for a package worth \$170 million, in a mixture of cash and Crown-owned land. The settlement was accompanied by a formal apology, delivered by Queen Elizabeth II in person during her 1995 visit to New Zealand. The Crown apologised for the invasion of the Waikato and the subsequent indiscriminate confiscation of land. Early newspaper reports relate that the invasion took place to stop attacks by war parties and the murder of settlers north of the Waikato River and attacks on Waikato settlers by ‘Kingites.’ When British forces crossed the Waikato in response, Maori saw it as an act of war. Ensuing land confiscations formed the basis of the grievance cases settled in 1946.

Kaingaroo: Sold and Resold

First Time: Captain Gilbert Mair NZC was a decorated soldier and surveyor who was well respected by both Maori and Pakeha. In



Taranaki conqueror Chief Te Wherowhero of Waikato became the first Maori King

1879 the great Kaingaroo Plain, estimated to contain 120,000 acres, came before the Native Land Court. After lengthy deliberations (around two years) it was awarded to Ngati Manawa, whose paramount chief Peraniko Tahawai had guided the surveyors around the boundaries. Captain Mair wrote in detail the story of the purchase by the Crown of Kaingaroo in 1879 for what was then a substantial sum of £15,000. Mair described the ceremony at Galatea where the money was handed over and the land transfer signed. So important was the occasion, the body of the by then deceased Peraniko was exhumed from his grave to ‘preside’ over the proceedings. The people were so grateful for the money, they individually offered a total of £600 to Mair in koha. Though sensitive to the customs, in his position he had to decline.

Mair wrote: “I read over the deed of cession, explaining at great length its irrevocable nature. I reminded the tribe of the ancestral name of Ka-ingaroo (the long enduring home),