

## CHAPTER 4

# SEARANCKE'S NEGOTIATIONS AS LAND PURCHASE OFFICER, 1850s

### 4.1 NEGOTIATIONS IN THE WAIKANAЕ AREA

Sections of Te Ati Awa, readying themselves to return to Taranaki in 1847, offered to sell portions of the Waikanae area to the Government. According to the later evidence of Wiremu Tamihana Te Neke of Te Ati Awa, the land was divided between those who intended to go back to Taranaki and those who wished to remain:

We came to this place [Waikanae] to point out boundaries of land we proposed to sell and to keep. Wiremu Kingi Te Rangitaketu put a pole on a hill close to the other side of this pole we proposed to sell and this side to retain. We then went to the boundary, the Wainui stream. Another pole was put in there to fix the portion for sale. At that time it was agreed upon who should remain and who should return to Taranaki. It was arranged by W Kingi that the portions outside should be sold by the parties returning and the other to be for the parties who remain on the land.<sup>1</sup>

When they heard of the proposed sale, Ngati Toa objected. Matene Te Whiwhi, Tamihana Te Rauparaha, Karanama Kapukai, and Hakaraia travelled to Waikanae where they rejected Te Ati Awa's claim, stating that 'Rangihaeata's boundary is from Whangaehu to Rimurepu'.<sup>2</sup> The grounds of their rejection lay in the argument that they, rather than Te Ati Awa, had been the original conquerors of the area. In their view, Waitohi's allocation of territory to Te Ati Awa for their participation in the conquest of the coast did not entitle them to regard that area as under their exclusive control. Although Ngati Toa did not 'dispute the right of the Ngati Awa to possess

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1. Otaki Native Land Court MB 2, 19 May 1873, p 181

and occupy the land for their own use, but they strongly object[ed] to their disposing of it to the Government'.<sup>3</sup>

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2. Ibid

3. McLean to Colonial Secretary, 26 November 1850, AJHR, 1861, C-1, p 258

Te Ati Awa argued that they were entitled to sell because they had assisted in the conquest. Until their arrival, Ngati Toa had been unable to fully hold the land against Ngati Apa and Muaupoko, 'from fear of whom and the Ngati Kahungunu they were compelled for security to live on the island of Kapiti'. As a result of that assistance, they had been allocated territory from Wellington Harbour to Kukutauaki Stream. Te Ati Awa told McLean that they had presented Ngati Toa with produce and two canoes, 'on which occasion the Ngati Toa chiefs publicly transferred their right to the land'. Their 'undisputed possession' had been underscored by the territorial definitions (between Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa, and Te Ati Awa) settled at the battles of Haowhenua and Kuititanga. And although the numbers of Te Ati Awa living at Waikanae had declined, they had maintained occupation since that time. Now they insisted on their right of sale.<sup>4</sup>

According to the evidence of Tamihana Te Neke, a compromise had been reached at the Waikanae meeting but the conflict regarding the rights of ownership which derived from differing roles in the conquest of the region, from gift exchange, and occupation, delayed purchase of this territory for more than a decade. McLean reported that both sides asserted their argument in 'strong terms' at the meeting he had convened in 1850 – and 'without any party arriving at any definite understanding'.<sup>5</sup> The land in question was 'not of much extent or value, the greater portion of it being necessary for the use of the natives', but McLean was:

anxious, however, to have the rights of the selling party or their opponents fairly established according to the prevailing customs of the country, so that if the land is in future required, no difficulty of disputed title may thereafter arise.<sup>6</sup>

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4. Ibid

5. Ibid

6. Ibid

However, conflicting interpretations of land right proved impossible to reconcile and McLean had to advise Ngati Toa and Te Ati Awa to discontinue their discussions.

Matters rested there except for an attempt by Governor Grey, in 1852, to persuade his old adversary, Te Rangihaeata, to sell Waikanae. This overture was ‘flatly and rudely refused’, Te Rangihaeata telling Grey, ‘You have had Porirua, Ahuriri, Wairarapa, Wanganui and the whole of the Middle Island given up to you and still you are not contented; we are driven into a corner, and yet you covet it’.<sup>7</sup>

Elsewhere along the Kapiti Coast, tribal complexities had to be sorted out before the Government could successfully pursue a purchase policy. Questions of boundaries and sales were discussed between Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Apa, and Rangitane. Ngati Apa continued to assert rights at least as far south as Omarupapaka, while Rangitane began to assert its authority to territory in the Upper Manawatu. In the meantime, the missionaries attempted to persuade ‘conquering tribes’ to accommodate the demands of defeated peoples. Samuel Williams later testified that ‘Ngati Raukawa had constantly asserted a claim as far as the range called Te Ahu o Turanga’, but that he had advised them to ‘withdraw their opposition to the sale of a large block lying useless to them’.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Richard Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, London, Wertheim and MacIntosh, 1855, p 339

8. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 17 March 1868, p 250

## **4.2 UPPER MANAWATU LANDS: RANGITANE'S OFFER**

Ngati Raukawa's general authority over the region was under increasing challenge. Te Hiriwanu, described as of Ngati Kahungunu, Motuahi and Ngati Upokoiri, travelled to Auckland where he offered to sell land to McLean.<sup>9</sup> There was some contention about the significance of this event, which gave rise to the Upper Manawatu negotiations. According to Ngati Raukawa, later arguing their case before the land court, Hiriwanu had first sought Taratoa's permission and they emphasised that McLean rejected the offer until their consent had been won. Rangitane was to argue, however, that McLean directed Hiriwanu to consult with Ngati Raukawa only because he sought to include Otaki and Waikanae in the sale.<sup>10</sup>

Disputes of interpretation of the significance of particular actions, extent of territory concerned, and understandings supposedly reached, were to punctuate the negotiations for the Rangitikei–Manawatu lands over the next 20 years.

Interest in the upper Manawatu flowed on from purchasing activities in the Wairarapa. Searancke had advanced £100 to Hoani Meihana and others of Rangitane for Ngaawapurua, at the Wairarapa end of 70-Mile Bush. Although this block was

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9. *Ibid*; Searancke to McLean, 27 September 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, p 280

10. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1D, 4 April 1868, p 497

located east of the Ruahine Ranges, the proposed alienation brought Rangitane interests on the western side, to the foreground of negotiations. In May 1858, James Grindell, an interpreter for the Native Land Purchase Department, was sent by Searancke to assess the Manawatu district – the nature of the land, who held interests in it and their attitude towards sale. When he reached the settlement of Raukawa on the western bank of the river, Grindell found Hiriwanu and his people opposed to Meihana's sale of Rangitane interests in the Wairarapa. Hiriwanu was prepared, however, to sell land on the western side. Hiriwanu told Grindell that:

Hoani Meihana had, most unjustifiably, acted in direct opposition to the expressed desire of the people resident on the land. He did not appear to object to its being sold at a future period, but he thought Hoani had been too precipitant [sic]. They were determined not to sell any lands on the East of Tararua (viz, in the 70 Mile Bush) until they had disposed of all their lands on the west side – supposing no doubt, that these lands being nearest to the Ngatiraukawas, were most likely to be disputed and claimed by them.<sup>11</sup>

The lands under offer lay west of the Ruahine Ranges to Meihana's claims, and north of the Manawatu to the sources of the Oroua, Mangaone, and Puhangina Rivers.

Grindell informing both Ngati Upokoiri (residing on the river between Raukawa and Puketotara), and Ngati Apa (by letter), that matters affecting their interests were to be discussed, travelled down-river with Hiriwanu to Puketotara. He told the assembled tribes that he had been sent by the Government to ascertain what lands they were willing to sell and their respective claims within them. Grindell advocated

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11. Journal of James Grindell, 19 June 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 46, encl 1, p 277

recognition of the interests of the east coast people resident along the river: 'I reminded them that there were several families located amongst them who had become part and parcel of themselves, and exhorted them to be mindful of the interests of these people in the disposal of their lands'.

But at the same time, he emphasised the advantages of maintaining a united front against Ngati Raukawa:

I represented to them that as they were all related together (having descended from one common source) they should endeavour to agree relative to boundaries and claims – that they should 'speak with one voice' – that if they were disunited by internal dissension they would be laying themselves open to the attacks of Ngatiraukawas from whom much opposition was to be expected, and that there would thus be much less chance of coming to an amicable understanding with that tribe.<sup>12</sup>

After discussions extending over several days it was decided that, in addition to the Puhangina block, land on the south bank should be offered for sale. Grindell estimated the two areas to comprise some 150,000 acres and recorded that the reserves and boundaries were decided. A portion of the block was allocated to Ngati Upokoiri and the existence of Ngati Raukawa interests to the east of the Oroua River, acknowledged: 'I was anxious to have the Oroua River as the western boundary, but it could not be arranged as the Ngatiraukawa have claims east of that river'.<sup>13</sup> No definite arrangement was made regarding Ngaawapurua.

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12. Journal of James Grindell, 2 July 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 46, encl 1, p 277

13. Ibid

### **4.3 THE REACTION OF NGATI RAUKAWA**

Ngati Raukawa's resistance to sale was beginning to break down. Several small blocks at Otaki had been submitted for sale, but Searancke recommended that these offers not be pursued until negotiations for the lands between the Manawatu and Rangitikei Rivers were more advanced.<sup>14</sup> Ihakara and Ngati Whakaterere of Ngati Raukawa had also offered land at the mouth of the Manawatu River in March 1858 – a proposal opposed by other groups within Ngati Raukawa. Grindell now travelled further down the river to ascertain the reaction of Ngati Raukawa and to pursue Ihakara's offer of sale of coastal lands. He anticipated some opposition to Hiriwanu's alienation, but no serious obstacle to the completion of the purchase, partly because of shifting attitudes to alienation. Nepia Taratoa, supported by his own people of Ngati Parewahawaha, and Ngati Huia, based at Poroutawhao where Rangihaeata had spent considerable time, continued to resist any further alienation. But Grindell reported that there was a strengthening perception amongst Ngati Raukawa that 'it was impossible to resist the "kawanatanga"'. According to Grindell, the non-selling sections saw 'Hirawanu's intentions of acting independently of them as a piece of assumption', while advocates of sale welcomed the move as strengthening their own position.<sup>15</sup>

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14. Searancke to McLean, 31 May 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 44, p 274

15. Journal of James Grindell, 7 July 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 46, encl 1, p 278

Grindell rejected any right of the larger tribal entity of Ngati Raukawa to prevent an alienation by hapu of their interests:

When the Ngatiraukawas first established themselves in the country, each division of the tribe claimed and took formal possession of certain tracts, as their share of the conquest, of which they forthwith became the sole proprietors and which they ever afterwards retained possession; but now, when the idea of selling the land is gaining ground amongst them, the opponents of such a step, for the first time, assert that the country is common property, and that no portion of it can be sold without the consent of all.<sup>16</sup>

He anticipated that in the changing climate of opinion, opponents of sale would be forced to confine their resistance to areas where their claim was undisputed. While the district could be purchased piecemeal, this would greatly increase the cost and the possibility of disputes. Grindell advocated a careful approach, with the object of effecting a large-scale alienation in which a single payment would be distributed among the various interested parties.<sup>17</sup> This view was shared by Searancke, who wrote to McLean advising that Taratoa should not be encouraged in any effort to subdivide the Manawatu lands.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of July, Taratoa's opposition was seen as untenable and for form's sake only. Searancke suggested that the chief's opposition was only 'for the satisfaction of his friends', and advised:

Let him understand this fairly that the land on this south side of the Manawatu is for them, together with one large block at Rangitikei where their mill is situated and I believe that there will be no difficulty – Nepia now stands almost alone, most of his friends 'te pupiri whenua' having consented to the sale . . .<sup>19</sup>

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16. Journal of James Grindell, 12 July 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 46, encl 1, p 278

17. J Luiten, 'Whanganui ki Porirua', claim Wai 52 record of documents, doc A1, p 26

18. Searancke to McLean, 26 July 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 12, ATL

19. Ibid

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Grindell also anticipated that Taratoa's remaining supporters would desert his cause 'if he persist in his opposition longer than they deem necessary to evince his power and importance . . .' He recorded that Taratoa had travelled to Puketotara and, on finding Rangitane determined that a sale should be effected, agreed to the alienation under his own mana:

he told them to 'wait a little while, a very little while', and he would not oppose their desire. He has since declared his intention of selling the whole country between Manawatu and Rangitikei, including a portion of Te Hiriwanui's block. I believe, however, that he does not object to Te Hiriwanui's receiving the money – he is merely ambitious of the name and anxious to prove his right to sell the whole country.<sup>20</sup>

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20. Journal of James Grindell, 12 July 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 46, encl 1, p 279

However, the matter was far from settled. Testimony in the Himatangi hearing suggests that Hoani Meihana had informed Taratoa of Hiriwanu's proposal and Rangitane's assent to it. After a runanga at Otaki, some 40 Ngati Raukawa – sections located both at the Rangitikei and the lower Manawatu – travelled to Puketotara where they met with the up-river peoples of Ngati Kauwhata, Ngati Te Ihiihi, and the offspring of intermarriage to respond to Rangitane's desire to sell.<sup>21</sup> According to Parakaia, he, Taratoa, and Aperahama Te Huruhuru had proposed that a block bounded by Oroua be sold jointly by Rangitane, Ngati Kauwhata, and Ngati Te Ihiihi. But up-river Ngati Raukawa affiliates had refused to condone the alienation. Their interests had to be taken into account before the purchase could be completed. The semi-independent nature of the relationship of Ngati Kauwhata and Ngati Ihiihi to the entity of Ngati Raukawa was also to become a matter of some importance in the context of the land court. Integral to Rangitane's claim that they held mana over the region, was the argument that Ngati Kauwhata's interests in the Oroua area did not entitle Ngati Raukawa based at Otaki – in the words of Peeti Te Awe Awe, 'Ngati Raukawa had no right. The man who had a right was Tapa Te Whata – he is Ngati Kauwhata'.<sup>22</sup>

However, those who had settled the coastal sections of the region considered that they did have some authority over the fate of the upper Manawatu. At Otaki, during discussions between the Government, Ngati Parewahawaha, other Ngati Raukawa, and Ngati Toa regarding Te Horo block, Tamihana Te Rauparaha and Matene Te Whiwhi demanded payment for the upper Manawatu so 'that Ngati Raukawa may

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21. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 16 March 1868, p 244

22. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1d, 4 April 1868, p 498

have the just proceeds'.<sup>23</sup> After some discussion, it was decided that sections of Ngati Raukawa, represented by Ihakara, Aperahama, Taratoa, and Wi Pukapuka should meet with Te Hiriwanu. A letter was sent to Te Hiriwanu, stating that Ngati Raukawa were prepared to accede to a limited alienation, stating: 'To whenua! hei tua mau, hei tahu mau, hei ko mau, hei hau hake mau'.<sup>24</sup> In August 1858, Searancke and Grindell, accompanied by Taratoa and a large contingent of leading Ngati Raukawa travelled to Raukawa, where a runanga was held. Groups described as being present include Ngati Parewahawaha, Pikiahu, Ngati Kauwhata, Ngati Te Ihiihi, Ngati Waratere, Ngati Whakateretere, Ngati Maniapoto, Ngati Upokoiri, Ngati Apa, Ngati Motuahi, and other Rangitane.<sup>25</sup> Taratoa and Ngati Raukawa rejected Hiriwanu's claim to Tawhitikuri but agreed to the formal return of land down to the Oroua River and consented to its immediate sale. Searancke recorded that:

Nepia and his friends gave up all right and title to the land of the Rangitane's, telling the Hiriwanu that they were now friends to do what he liked with his land, if he wished to sell to do so, that he had come up at my desire to publicly assent to his doing so . . . and clearly signified that as soon as the sale of the upper part of the Manawatu was completed he would be prepared to go on with the lower part.<sup>26</sup>

#### **4.4 SETTING THE BOUNDARY OF RANGITANE INTERESTS**

The next obstacle to the completion of the purchase was generated by Rangitane—Upokoiri rather than within Ngati Raukawa. The exact sequence of events is not

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23. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 16 March 1868, pp 244–245

24. *Ibid*, p 245

25. Searancke to McLean, 27 September 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 48, p 280; Searancke to McLean, 5 September 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 14, ATL

26. Searancke to McLean, 5 September 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 14, ATL

clear. According to a private letter from Searancke to McLean, dated 5 September, Hiriwanu insisted at the Raukawa meeting that:

before the land could be sold that it must be surveyed all round the Boundaries and then paid for at the rate of 30/- per acre – that his land was of immense extent and that it should not be sold in the dark, that you had promised him that it should be actually surveyed . . .<sup>27</sup>

Privately, Searancke blamed these demands on the precedent of Kempthorne's survey and the increasing difficulty in purchasing at a low price, on 'the advance of knowledge among the Natives generally the great advantages from position and value of this land'.<sup>28</sup> Hiriwanu's demands were not, however, fully conveyed in official correspondence until 12 November. According to the published report of 27 September, Searancke had pointed out the difficulty of surveying heavily forested land and after two days negotiation, Rangitane had agreed to accompany him to the Ruahine Ranges from which point a sketch survey of the block could be made. Searancke claimed that Hiriwanu was satisfied with this rough delineation of the block's boundaries, but the obstacles to purchase were to prove insurmountable in the short term and the chief was later represented as capriciously reneging on this arrangement.<sup>29</sup>

Challenges were mounted by adjoining tribes – to the north, by Ngatirarahata, centred at Patea, and to west by Ngati Kauwhata and Ngati Ihiihi. According to Meihana, the south and south-west boundaries of the block had been set at the Oroua River by Ngati Whakateretere and Ngati Kauwhata. However, Ngati Kauwhata elders who had not attended the Raukawa runanga rejected the inclusion of the river

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27. Ibid

28. Ibid

29. Searancke to McLean, 27 September 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 48, p 280

in the block and demanded that the boundary be set at the Mangaone River instead.<sup>30</sup>

Te Hiriwanu and his people accompanied Searancke to the Ngati Kauwhata settlement of Awaturi where the matter was settled ‘amicably’ after several days of discussion.<sup>31</sup> Searancke decided to give priority to the definition of Rangitane and Ngati Raukawa interests:

The Ngatikawhata and Ngatiwhiti [sic] giving way to Te Hiriwanu, I found that the West boundary not being defined by any natural features, but merely by certain names of places, the position of which were uncertain, and therefore liable to be moved at the Natives’ pleasure, it would be necessary that a line (boundary) should be cut . . .<sup>32</sup>

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30. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 16 March 1868, p 246; Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 17 March 1868, p 252

31. Searancke to McLean, 27 September 1858, AJHR, 1858, C-1, no 48, p 280

32. Ibid

Accounts before the land court suggest that a subtle adjustment of interest was occurring within Ngati Raukawa alliances rather than between them and Rangitane. Reverend Williams saw the boundary setting as 'entirely between Ngati Raukawa hapus' – an adjustment of the claims of Ngati Ihiihi and Ngati Kauwhata, with Ngati Raukawa groups resident in the lower reaches of the river.<sup>33</sup> This view was supported by Te Kooro Te One and Te Aratakana of Ngati Kauwhata. Te Kooro denied that the boundary at Oroua had ever been accepted by his people. They had been 'hardly persuaded' to acquiesce to Rotopiko, between the Mangaone and Oroua Rivers as the dividing line.<sup>34</sup> At Awahuri, Taratoa stated his acceptance of the Oroua as the boundary to Rangitane interests. Tohutohu of Ngati Te Ihiihi rejected Taratoa's ability to make that decision: 'You must not bring the boundary to Oroua – it is for me and Ngati Kauwhata to do that, the owners of the land'.<sup>35</sup> But when it was again proposed that the boundary should be drawn at the Mangaone, Wi Pukapuka had replied 'If Ngati Kauwhata insists on Mangaone we shall insist on taking it to Oroua', and a compromise was reached.<sup>36</sup>

Agreement had been reached among all interested parties that a sale could be effected by Rangitane, the boundaries apparently agreed, but the extent of their interest remained a matter of dispute. In Ngati Raukawa eyes, the entire interests of Rangitane on the west coast were satisfied by the sale. Te Kooro Te One later testified to Ngati Raukawa interpretation of the significance of that agreement:

Hirawanu expressed his gratitude for the concession of Ngatiraukawa in favor of his 'hoko . . . Nepia said, "Ka hoatu e au tena whenua ki a koe" – I am satisfied; Ngati

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33. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1C, 17 March 1868, p 252

34. Ibid, p 254

35. Ibid, p 256

36. Ibid, p 255

*Wellington*

Apa is the ‘matua’ of the land, the other side of the Rangitikei:– and now your wish is gratified “hei mutunga tonu – tanga tena mo to taha” what remains is for me alone.”<sup>37</sup>

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37. Ibid, p 254

While there were Rangitane living outside the boundaries agreed upon for the sale of Ahuaturanga, in Williams' opinion, they 'seemed to come in only under Ngati Te Ihi Ihi', with whom extensive intermarriage had occurred.<sup>38</sup> According to Ngati Raukawa testimony, the boundary for Ahuaturanga was a 'barrier' to Rangitane's claim.<sup>39</sup> Taratoa had told Hiriwanu that he might sell to the agreed boundary but that 'If the fire is kindled on any other portion "ka tineia, mo te hoko tenei."' Meihana later stated that he did not know 'whether the boundary agreed on was fixed as a tribal boundary or as a boundary of sale', and that 'nothing was said about Rangitane claims in the strip between the boundary of the block and Oroua'.<sup>40</sup> Te Awe Awe claimed, however, that it was he who had fixed the boundary to retain land for himself between the Queen's line and the river, and denied that it was set as the dividing line between the two tribes. But he admitted that he had ceased to cultivate land at Pouwhata after the sale. Rangitane was to later dispute that their interests had been confined to the boundaries set for Ahuaturanga – or acknowledged adequately by the sale of that block.

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38. Ibid, p 252

39. Ibid, p 255

40. Ibid, p 247

#### **4.5 PROBLEMS OF PRICE**

Although Searancke regarded the question of survey and boundary position as settled, he still felt concern about the price that would be asked. Convinced of the importance of the acquisition, which he saw as opening the way for further purchase in the Manawatu, Searancke informed McLean that he was prepared to offer £5000, or as much as £7000 – at a rate of ninepence per acre for a calculated 170,000 acres.<sup>41</sup> By October, Searancke considered the purchase to have been completed, ‘inasmuch as they want the money to be shown to them’ and reported:

£5500 is the price that we stuck at. Of course they wanted double that sum. I offered £4000 which I do not think very much for 200,000 acres of fine timbered land but the former sum I was told that they would take if offered. I purpose closing the purchase at once by giving them a sum of £2000 – and the balance at not very distant dates . . .<sup>42</sup>

Within weeks, however, these plans had gone awry. Searancke reported that he had met with Te Hiriwanu, other Rangitane, and some Ngati Apa to finalise arrangements for the alienation of the block. At first, matters had seemed to progress smoothly for the Government, Searancke stating that, ‘we arranged anew the reserves, reducing them very much in extent, and I also consented, as there appeared to be a complication of difficulties, to cut off a portion of the land on the Oroua river

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41. Searancke to McLean, 13 September 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 15, ATL

42. Searancke to McLean, 11 October 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 16, ATL

and make it a distinct purchase'.<sup>43</sup> According to the official report, Te Hiriwanu had then informed him that he was 'determined not to sell his land except by the acre'. Searancke argued that this was an impossible demand – and one that had been settled in September. It was now that he recorded Te Hiriwanu's insistence, if the 'land should be sold in the dark, that he should require a much larger sum than we formerly spoke about, and mentioned sum too ridiculous to report'.<sup>44</sup> The Government's offer of £5000 was refused and prior survey again requested, Te Hiriwanu suggesting that this had been promised to him by McLean. Searancke argued that this would undermine his claim, representing to Te Hiriwanu:

the difficulties into which he himself was re-plunging his land, which was now principally through my interest and exertions with opposing Tribes, assented to, and the sale of it allowed to him . . .<sup>45</sup>

In private, he told McLean that he could not consent to the survey, 'as that, I imagine would involve my making him acquainted with the quantity'.<sup>46</sup>

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43. Searancke to McLean, 12 November 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 50, p 282

44. Ibid

45. Ibid

46. Searancke to McLean, 1 November 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 17, ATL

## *Wellington*

Discussions were broken off ‘to save disputes among themselves’.<sup>47</sup> In this context, Searancke had little sympathy with Te Hiriwanu’s aspirations which he attributed to tribal jealousy and ignorance:

The number of different tribes interested in the sale of this Block, and having all made over or difficulty, has had, in my opinion, the effect of making him fearful of selling it for a sum of money that, though a fair price and large, would appear but small when divided their claims to Te Hiriwanu in order that the land may be sold without any confusion among so many; irrespective of this reason, the isolated position and ignorance of these Tribes, but seldom brought into contact with Europeans, or even with their more civilised brethren on the coast; and who, through accidental circumstances, have been again put in full possession of the land of their forefathers, having but a slight knowledge of the value of money, makes them more anxious to conduct the sale of their own land slowly, and attended with all their own Maori custom, and strive to obtain a price and enunciate a new principle in the sale of land which will give them importance, and place them a favourable contrast with the Tribes who have sold land to the government.<sup>48</sup>

In the meantime, Stewart was left to carry on the survey of the block in the hope that this would ‘keep the idea of the sale of it constantly and prominently before the Natives’.<sup>49</sup> Searancke believed that there would be a delay of only a month or two since ‘the other natives interested will not allow the sale of this land to be stopped by any ‘pakeke’ on the part of Hiriwanu’.<sup>50</sup> In the event, however, the purchase of the upper Manawatu was not to be effected until 1864.

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47. Searancke to McLean, 20 November 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 18, ATL

48. Searancke to McLean, 12 November 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 50, p 282

49. *Ibid*

50. Searancke to McLean, 1 November 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 17, ATL; Searancke to McLean, 20 November 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 18, ATL

#### **4.6 NEGOTIATIONS REINSTITUTED AT WAIKANAE**

Negotiations for Waikanae lands were also re-initiated in 1858 when, in April, Searancke entered into an agreement with 'the Chiefs and people of Ngatitōa and Ngatiawa to fully cede a portion of [their] place' to the Crown. A deed was signed by 12 chiefs included Matene Te Whiwhi, Nopera, Rawiri Puaha, Heruwina Te Tupe, and Teira. The alienation was described as extending from Poauwa to Pawakataka and east to land sold by Ngati Kahungunu. The northernmost coastal point was at Waikanae. Searancke calculated this area to comprise 60,000 acres and described it as mostly of a 'broken hilly' character.<sup>51</sup> The purchase was, however, far from finalised, no agreement having been reached on the purchase price which was to be decided after survey. At this stage, only a deposit of £140 was paid.<sup>52</sup>

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51. Searancke to McLean, 31 May 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, p 274

52. Turton, Deeds, no 23, 20 April 1858, p 129

Searancke attempted to complete the transaction in the following months, but his efforts to survey the area revealed the limited quality of the initial agreement. He immediately ran into difficulties caused by ‘numerous conflicting claimants’, and over the extent of reserves and the final price.<sup>53</sup> The purchase was, however, now variously calculated at 76,000 and 95,000 acres, reflecting an enlargement in the proposed alienation to Kukutauaki Stream, which was generally regarded as the northernmost extent of Te Ati Awa interests.<sup>54</sup>

Searancke complained that he had been ‘compelled to consent to the eka eka notion . . .’ which he criticised as giving rise to ‘endless trouble’. The reserves proposed were estimated by Searancke to total 6000 acres.<sup>55</sup> His disapproval appears to reflect a general reluctance among officials to allow Maori to exclude extensive portions of land from initial alienations to keep for later sale. He suggested that if the reserve system was to continue, it should be ‘fairly understood that the land must be in the first place conveyed to the Crown and the portion reserved for the eka eka pointed out on the ground and to be as a place for their occupation and not speculation . . .’<sup>56</sup> In the meantime, Searancke attempted to by-pass the issue by persuading the vendors to leave the extent of the reserves for the Governor to decide. The friends of Reverend Riwai Te Ahu demanded, however, that:

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53. Searancke to McLean, 31 May 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 44, p 274

54. Searancke to McLean, 26 July 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 12, ATL; Searancke to McLean, 6 August 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 47, p 279

55. Searancke to McLean, 26 July 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 12, ATL

56. *Ibid*

*Searancke's Negotiations as Land Purchase Officer, 1850s*

the lands should, prior to any sale, be surveyed and conveyed to them; also insisting that the disputed portion of the block, about fifteen hundred acres (1500) in extent, should also be reserved, in addition to the reserve which I had consented for them to have, in extent about twentyfive hundred (2500) acres.

Searancke refused, suggesting that they should have right of occupation for two years with an option to purchase during that time, but referred the matter to McLean.<sup>57</sup>

The Government's rejection of the price demanded by the vendors obviated the necessity of any response from McLean on this question. It was the issue of price that finally thwarted the sale. Searancke had suggested to McLean that no more than sixpence per acre should be paid,<sup>58</sup> but was obliged to accept a price of £3200 in addition to the £140 already paid as a deposit. Further payments to settle the claims of Muaupoko and Ngati Kahungunu were also envisaged and would raise the cost to over ninepence an acre. Despite the poor quality of the land, Searancke believed that the price was justified by the block's position and size, and by 'the jealousy existing among the various Natives resident' on it.<sup>59</sup> That sum was, however, rejected by the Government, which insisted on the original offer of sixpence per acre on the estimated area since the terrain was of such a rugged character.<sup>60</sup>

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57. Searancke to McLean, 6 August 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 47, p 279

58. Searancke to McLean, 26 July 1858, Donald Mclean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 12, ATL; Searancke to McLean, 20 November 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 18, ATL

59. Searancke to McLean, 6 August 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 47, p 279

60. Searancke to McLean, 11 October 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 49, p 281

## *Wellington*

When Searancke returned to the district in November 1858, the Government's proposal was accepted by Ngati Toa but rejected by Te Atiawa. The Government abandoned its efforts to buy land north of Whareroa Stream, near Waikanae itself, because Te Ati Awa wished to retain 'all the best of it', while refusing to reduce their price.<sup>61</sup> But Searancke proceeded with the purchase of the southern portion of the land originally under negotiation. Known as Whareroa or Matahuka, the block comprised 34,000 acres, and was bounded by the Whareroa Stream in the south and the Huruhi settlement to the north. Reserves of 200 acres at Wharemauku, and of 50 acres at Whareroa, were set aside for the vendors and for Tamati Te Whakapakakeke respectively. A claim was also marked out on behalf of the half-caste children of John Nicholl and Henry Flugent. According to Searancke's reports to McLean, £800 was to be paid for land. The purchase price included £70 which had been already received on 20 April, and it appears from later evidence that the balance was paid in instalments. In November 1858, Searancke described the transaction for Whareroa as being finalised without 'objection or difficulty' and stated that he considered the land to be ready for immediate settlement.<sup>62</sup> It appears, however, that the purchase was not fully accepted, objections to the northern boundary being later raised by Te Ati Awa. Nor does there appear to be a deed relating to this purchase, although witnesses before the Native Land Court subsequently referred to – and disputed – one dated 26 November 1858.

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61. Searancke to McLean, 20 November 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 18, ATL

62. Searancke to McLean, 27 November 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 52, pp 283–284; Searancke to McLean, December 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 19, ATL

#### **4.7 TE AWAHOU**

Searancke had come to the conclusion that only by immediate payment of a large portion of the purchase price could deals be clinched with Maori.<sup>63</sup> In the course of the Upper Manawatu negotiations he had received £1500 in funds for the purchase of both that block and lands at the mouth of the river.<sup>64</sup> In November 1858 he used £400 of this money for an initial payment to Ihakara and Ngati Whakaterere for the Te Awahou block (comprising 37,000 acres on the north bank of the mouth of the Manawatu River) in order to put pressure on the non-sellers, led by Nepia Taratoa.

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63. Searancke to McLean, 11 October 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 16, ATL

64. Searancke to McLean, 12 November 1858, Wellington District, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 50, p 281

During the negotiations for Hiriwanu's land, Searancke had been also attempting to reconcile Nepia to Ihakara's proposed sale. This was a more difficult problem for Taratoa than that of acknowledging the rights of older, resurgent occupiers over land, the sale of which might satisfy the Europeans. Ihakara was acknowledged as the primary interest-holder within Te Awahou, but the recognition of the right of the individual, or hapu, to dispose of interests within the tribal rohe was likely to result in further loss of land. Ihakara saw land sales, settlement, and cooperation with the Government as the best course of action and spoke of Te Awahou's alienation as but the first step in the sale of the lower Manawatu lands. He told the court at the hearing for Himatangi, 'I did say with reference to Te Awahou – I will take out my plank in order that the ship may sink – I took out my plank and the water is running in . . . The anti-selling league is the ship I mean'.<sup>65</sup> Taratoa's party asserted a wider right of Ngati Raukawa to hold onto tribal land – against the weight of official opinion and the determination of the individual to sell land. They regarded Ihakara's statements about removing the plank of Te Awahou as a 'malicious act towards the tribe . . .' and objected to his having brought 'persons not owning the land' on it, in order to strengthen the party of sellers.<sup>66</sup>

Throughout August, Searancke 'pacified' the sellers while taking 'every opportunity of associating Nepia Taratoa with myself in all disputes and negotiations pending in the District'.<sup>67</sup> He reported that he had held frequent private discussions

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65. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1C, 18 March 1868, p 265

66. *Ibid*, p 267

67. Searancke to McLean, 15 November 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 51, p 283

with the chief, informing him of the Government's intention of fulfilling 'pledges' made to Ihakara. Taratoa's replies were considered by Searancke to be 'dubious', but 'on the whole favourable'.<sup>68</sup> Samuel Williams again added his persuasions, advising the non-sellers to withdraw their opposition. He later testified that he had told them that, 'while they might be afraid of mischief arising from a particular hapu selling its land – I saw clearly that mischief would arise from any body of natives trying to prevent real owners from selling their land'.<sup>69</sup> One hundred and fifty Ngati Raukawa – the majority being supporters of Ihakara – assembled at Te Awahou in early November. Nepia attended the meeting with what appears to have been some reluctance. According to Searancke, when Taratoa voiced no objection, all believed that he had consented to the sale of the whole block. Taratoa demanded that the price should be discussed immediately but on finding Searancke apparently ready to accede to all the demands of Ngati Whakaterere, he left the meeting. On the next morning Searancke found that Taratoa was 'sending Natives over the whole Block marking out his own and friends' claims'. These areas were 'with one exception very small, and the worst parts of the Block, the whole not amounting to one-third of the whole block'.<sup>70</sup> Native Land Court minutes would suggest that it was Omarupapaka that was under dispute, Parakaia later testifying that the poles were

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68. Ibid

69. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 18 March 1868, p 267

70. Searancke to McLean, 15 November 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 51, p 283

taken out from the sea to the river and taken southwards to Pakingahau.<sup>71</sup> Searancke reported:

Ihakara and his friends again assembled, and demanded that the sale should be proceeded with, I with some difficulty pacified them, and in the meanwhile sent for Nepia, and found that notwithstanding all his promises made both to me and the Natives, he was determined, while preserving an apparently friendly appearance to the Government, to resist the sale of any lands over which he laid claim. This determination on his part I believe to have some connection with his evident wish to proceed to Auckland to see the Maori King.<sup>72</sup>

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71. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 17 March 1868, p 259

72. Searancke to McLean, 15 November 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 51, p 283

*Searancke's Negotiations as Land Purchase Officer, 1850s*

From the beginning, Searancke had considered Taratoa's objections to have been 'without any feasible grounds' and as less tenable, as Ihakara's support had grown.<sup>73</sup> Taratoa's tolerance for the alienation of any land over which Ngati Raukawa asserted a claim had only ever been reluctantly given. Searancke, however, saw this latest action as a gross piece of deceit on Taratoa's part, and felt quite justified in pushing ahead with the purchase, telling the chief 'utterly impossible it was for him to resist the general wish of the Natives to sell their waste lands', that he would create distrust amongst his own people, and that any further difficulty in completing the transaction would be laid at his door.<sup>74</sup>

Arguing that 'too much notice' had been given to the opponents of sale, Searancke agreed to a purchase price of £2500. This compact was backed by a sizeable down payment, in the hope that many of those 'wavering between selling and holding the land', would consider any further opposition to the sale to be 'useless'.<sup>75</sup> A deed was signed by 67 people. Taratoa refused to do so. The external boundaries were described, but the reserves were left for future consideration. Searancke reported to McLean that this was a temporary measure, but one likely to lead to a speedy solution of the Government's difficulties in the whole district:

As regards the step I have taken at the Awahou I depend upon you to justify me with the Government. [I]t is a bold stroke and one that will I think carry some weight with it in the district. I was compelled to either do what I have done or at once give up any further chance of purchasing at Manawatu. [T]he deed forwarded is only a temporary affair until the excitement settles down and that double-faced old sinner Nepia comes round in his ideas and becomes honest.<sup>76</sup>

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73. Ibid

74. Ibid

75. Ibid

76. Searancke to McLean, 20 November 1858, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 18, ATL

*Wellington*

In December 1858 a further £50 was paid on the block to Ngati Apa at Ihakara's request.<sup>77</sup>

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77. Searancke to McLean, 30 December 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 55, p 285

Searancke spent the next few months in the Wairarapa, returning to the west coast in May 1859, when he attempted to finalise the purchase of Te Awahou. Taratoa now signed the deed. Parakaia, who also accepted the sale at this stage, later testified that the boundary was set between the lands to be sold and those to be retained. He told the court that ‘Nepia stood up and extended his arms and said, “My son, Ihakara! You have your desire, eat your portion.”’<sup>78</sup> According to Ngati Raukawa witnesses, Taratoa intended the area excepted to the north of the block to be kept for Ngati Turanga, Ngati Raukau, and Ngati Te Au.<sup>79</sup> However, Amos Burr, appearing for the Crown, which supported Ngati Apa’s claims in the region, suggested that Taratoa had included Ngati Apa when speaking of lands to be kept for his people.<sup>80</sup> The balance of the payment was then disbursed, although the total had been reduced to £2335.<sup>81</sup> According to Parakaia, all interested tribes were satisfied, Ihakara making payment to Ngati Toa because they were conquerors, and Ngati Apa and Muaupoko on the grounds of their tupuna. Conquest was thus acknowledged, but not to the exclusion of other groups’ rights.<sup>82</sup>

The second deed lists, but leaves undefined, those areas within the block that were to be excepted from the transaction. These included areas at Raumatangi, Wirikino and Haumiaroa which were considered to have been already transferred to the New Zealand Company, gifts to the half-caste children of Cook, and to the Reverend Duncan, 20 acres for Ihakara and his brother, Kereopa, which was subsequently subdivided, and urupa at Moutoa and Whakawehi. A reserve was also defined:

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78. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 17 March 1868, p 259

79. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 20 March 1868, p 294

80. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1d, 3 April 1868, pp 476–477

81. Turton, Deeds, no 52, p 176

82. Otaki Native Land Court MB 1c, 17 March 1868, p 260

## *Wellington*

These are the boundaries commencing at the Manawatu at the fence of Te Kuka (Mr Cook) thence to the landmark of Ihakara (pou Ihakara) thence direct to Auwaituroa thence to Te Mutu at Manawatu thence following the course of the Manawatu River to Manawaaru where it turns off towards Mukaka to the end of the forest of Tapuiwaru and along the edge of that forest at Paretau and thence to Manawatu.<sup>83</sup>

Taratoa's fenced settlement and an adjacent area were set aside, for Nepia and Kereopa respectively. But, in line with McLean's preference for Maori to purchase land themselves on individual title rather than for it to be reserved, these lands were to be bought at the rate of £5 per quarter-acre. A similar arrangement was made for Wirihana at Moutoa.<sup>84</sup>

Te Peina, Wereta Te Waha, and Horima refused to accept any money for their claims. These were then pointed out by Ihakara in the presence of the opposed rangatira and Searancke instructed Stewart to survey the disputed areas. Te Peina immediately objected. Searancke called a halt until a 'satisfactory arrangement' could be made. He then wrote to interested parties, including Taratoa, inviting their assistance in settling the disputed claims. On all but one refusing to come to his aid, Searancke instructed Stewart to complete the survey as 'quietly as possible'. He was to mark on the plan both the boundaries pointed out by Ihakara, and the various claims made by others, so that the land could be gazetted and 'such portions thrown open at once for sale as [were] undisputed'.<sup>85</sup> The areas marked as belonging to Te Peina were reserved to his people by the second deed. Te Peina, however, did not consider their claim limited to the boundaries so defined.<sup>86</sup>

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83. Turton, Deeds, no 52, p 176

84. Ibid

85. Searancke to Assistant Native Secretary, 31 May 1860, AJHR, 1861, C-1, p 291

86. Wardell to Superintendent, 16 December 1872, MA series 13/75B, NA Wellington

#### **4.8 WAINUI AND WHAREROA**

The already confused situation at Waikanae was exacerbated by a further purchase to the south of the Whareroa block, the arrangements for which were linked with those concerning Whareroa itself. In June 1859, Searancke reported that he had purchased 30,000 acres of land about Wainui and Paekakariki which had been initially excepted from the sale of Porirua district as reserves for Ngati Toa. The agreed price was 1.850 which included an earlier payment of 'earnest money' – a sum of £50 – to Hurumutu, the principal vendor. The purchase price (a little less than sevenpence per acre) was regarded as sizeable, but justified by the block's proximity to Wellington and position on the road to Wanganui. The land reserved – their settlements at Whareroa, Wainui, and Paekakariki, and tracts at Ngapaipurua, Te Rongo-o-te-wera, and Te Ruka – totalled 787 acres. Even though the reserves amounted to less than 3 percent of the area alienated, they were deemed 'large'. Searancke reported, however, that 'when the number of Natives resident within the boundaries [was] taken into consideration they could not in justice be made smaller'. Two pieces of land within the sale boundaries were also conveyed by deed of gift to Pakeha married to Maori women.<sup>87</sup>

In July 1859, the land purchase commissioner reported that he had made surveys of both the Wainui and Whareroa blocks: 'surveying and marking out the boundaries

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87. Searancke to McLean, 6 July 1859, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 56, p 285

*Wellington*

of all the reserves, pointing them out to the natives . . .’ In contrast to his earlier comment regarding the population of the Wainui district, Searancke suggested that his efforts to reserve land in Whareroa were ‘to little purpose, they all with but few exceptions looking northward’.<sup>88</sup> According to Hurumutu’s evidence, when the boundary between Wainui and Whareroa had been established, a second payment of £140 for Whareroa was divided between Eruini Te Tupe (who received £50), Nopera (£40), and himself.<sup>89</sup> Deposits were paid and accepted without an exact understanding of which land was involved, with the consequence that potential vendors were led into making progressive alienations. Hurumutu told the court that Ngati Toa had understood that the initial payment was for the mountain Pouawha:

After we had received the £50, Searancke wished it to include the land at the bottom – all Wainui to Wareroa. When we agreed to receive the second payment, Mr Searancke desired us to include all the bottom part the lower portion extending to the sea – the Whareroa people agreed to this.<sup>90</sup>

Searancke had been optimistic that the area north of Whareroa could be purchased if sevenpence per acre was paid, but his problems persisted.<sup>91</sup> When he returned to Waikanae in August, he found that his confidence regarding future purchase had been misplaced. His efforts to complete the survey as ‘the only practical way of bringing the matter to an issue’ proved too contentious:

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88. Searancke to McLean, 8 July 1859, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 26, ATL

89. Otaki Native Land Count MB 2, 30 May 1873, p 207

90. Ibid

91. Searancke to McLean, 27 November 1858, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 52 , p 284

*Searancke's Negotiations as Land Purchase Officer, 1850s*

a large group of natives headed by Wi Tamihama were still violently opposing the sale and also Eruini Te Tupe coming forward and saying that as the sale if carried out would breed dispute etc etc among them and that he (consequently) would therefore rather withdraw his offer of sale, I determined to relinquish an affair which I feared would lead to bloodshed . . .<sup>92</sup>

The question of exactly what land had been purchased by the Crown was not settled until the early 1870s when Wi Parata brought a claim to the land court for Ngarara block, the boundaries of which included Whareroa and Wainui. H S Wardell, working as an agent for the provincial government, reached an agreement with Parata that the line between Crown and Maori land would be set at magnetic east from the trig station at Wood's fence. At the same time, the court awarded a portion of Ngarara (as Muaupoko block) to Eruini Te Tupe, who admitted having received £50 on account of his land and expressed himself willing to see through the transaction.<sup>93</sup>

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92. Searancke to McLean, 5 August 1859, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 28, ATL

93. Wardell to Superintendent, 10 June 1873, MA series 13/75B, NA Wellington

#### **4.9 BREAK IN LAND NEGOTIATIONS**

Elsewhere, too, problems continued to frustrate land acquisition. By August, Wereta was still holding out against the alienation of Te Awahou, while Tamihana Te Rauparaha refused to accede to the sale of the small Te Horo block. Hirawanu was informed that the Government was prepared to offer sixpence per acre for his land, estimated at 200,000 acres. Searancke reported that he believed that this sum would be accepted ultimately, but ‘that so long as the Natives think that by referring to you [McLean] or any other officer that they can get an increase of price, no district officer will be able to deal with them’.<sup>94</sup> The conflict between Ngati Apa and Ngati Raukawa was also threatening to overturn Hadfield’s plans to establish a mission in the Otaki area. Taratoa, Te Kingi, and Te Wata (of Ngati Kauwhata) had consented to the alienation of Whakaari and set up poles to mark the boundary. Searancke reported, however, that Ngati Apa were ‘very much excited and indignant at the idea of Ngati Raukawa assuming the right of giving the land away without reference to them and determined to oppose it’. Ngati Apa were invited to participate in the gift to the church, and it was eventually agreed that they would match Ngati Raukawa by giving an equivalent acreage (1000 acres) to Reverend Taylor at Wanganui.<sup>95</sup>

Searancke’s competence was called into question by the Governor in mid-1859. He had been unable to effect purchases at the sort of low prices contemplated by the

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94. Searancke to McLean, 5 August 1859, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 28, ATL

*Searancke's Negotiations as Land Purchase Officer, 1850s*

Government, and adjustments of boundaries, hotly disputed in a region where the tribal status quo had been so recently disrupted, proceeded at a pace dictated largely by Maori, not the imperatives of colonisation. Searancke attributed his failure to effect any large-scale purchase to:

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95. Ibid, no 29

## *Wellington*

The extreme jealousy of the Natives amongst themselves respecting the ownership of claims of different families, thereby rendering it necessary that the boundaries of lands offered for sale should, when possible, be surveyed or very clearly defined by perambulation previous to completion of purchase. The necessity that the consent of all the owners should be obtained, and the greatest publicity being given to the negotiation [sic], thereby preventing any of them making after claims, for which I regret to say they have a peculiar aptitude. This conclusion I have come to, from the innumerable claims made on lands sold in 1853, 4, and 5.<sup>96</sup>

He was increasingly discouraged by the slow rate of progress of acquisition along the coast, and clearly dismayed at the ease with which apparent deals fell through. His letters make frequent reference to his weariness and his frustration with tribal politics, Maori vacillation and perversity, and their preference for dealing with McLean.

Searancke began to question the wisdom of not accepting limited alienations in the pursuit of the large scale acquisition, and to doubt whether the purchase methods so effectively applied by McLean in the Hawke's Bay would work to the west coast situation. In August 1859, he advocated acceptance of an offer by Ngati Upokoiri, who were preparing to return to Ahuriri, to sell a 350-acre block at Moutoa, lying between Otaki and the Manawatu River, and located within a larger general reserve made by Grey.<sup>97</sup> Searancke expressed some reservations about the purchase as creating a precedent of a small-scale and expensive acquisition, but suggested that the reservation of large areas did not work because of 'jealousies and want of unanimity among the Natives themselves'. This failure having been demonstrated by such offers to sell, so Searancke argued, it would be 'desirable to reconsider the advantage of any longer refusing to purchase the lands the Natives are so anxious to

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96. Searancke to McLean, 21 February 1860, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 61, p 288

97. Searancke to McLean, 24 August 1859, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 58, p 287

*Searancke's Negotiations as Land Purchase Officer, 1850s*

sell'.<sup>98</sup> The acquisition of the block would allow the Awahou swamp to be drained and 'the getting in of the claims of this tribe, who, through removing to a distance, may give considerable trouble to any land purchasing operations in the district'.<sup>99</sup>

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98. Ibid

99. Ibid

## *Wellington*

Although Searancke tended to see sale as the ultimate solution to disputes between different tribes and hapu,<sup>100</sup> purchase negotiations ground to a halt. He was increasingly concerned about the laying in of arms in the district.<sup>101</sup> In May, Searancke agreed to make a sketch survey of lands at Muhunoa-Ohau, repeatedly offered for sale by Roera Te Hukiki, based at Otaki. He informed Hukiki, however, that ‘in the present unsettled state of affairs [he] could not think of involving the Government in further embarrassment by making any purchase of lands’.<sup>102</sup> It is likely that the question of price played a large role in the failure to complete a deal. Searancke reported himself as ‘anxious to have if possible, completed the purchase as it would have been the best proof at this present time that it is not our intention to take their lands as their reports go, by force without purchase’.<sup>103</sup> But Hukiki’s demand for £7000 had ‘electrified’ Searancke, who had no alternative but to give him time to think over his counter-offer of £1000. Searancke considered this to be a generous sum for 22,000 acres, only 10,000 acres of which was level and arable.<sup>104</sup>

Within days, the commissioner was instructed to break off any survey activity in the Manawatu, and to report to the Governor, because he was creating ‘dissatisfaction . . . among the Southern Natives’. Searancke defended his actions, but in June recommended a suspension of purchasing efforts in the Wellington region, stating that:

two-thirds of sums of money paid on account of land during the year 1859 and to the end of March, 1860, has been devoted solely to the purchase of arms and ammunition; also that large sums of money have been forwarded to Waikato for the use and purpose of the Maori King.<sup>105</sup>

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100. Searancke to McLean, 21 February 1860, Wellington District, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 61, p 288

101. Searancke to McLean, 25 April 1860, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 37, ATL; Searancke to McLean, 3 September 1860, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 43, ATL

102. Searancke to Assistant Native Secretary, 31 May 1860, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 66, p 291

103. Searancke to McLean, 10 May 1860, Donald McLean Papers, MS 32 (565), no 38, ATL

104. *Ibid*

105. Searancke to McLean, 18 June 1860, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 67, p 292

Searancke's reports on the temper of the country were mixed, but he remained cautious throughout 1860 'when even the most friendly Natives evince such sympathy for their friends at Taranaki'. Thus, while many former opponents of sale in Upper Manawatu seemed to be ready to endorse the alienation, Searancke thought that it would be unwise for the Government to attempt to complete the transaction.<sup>106</sup> However, Te Awahou was finally gazetted and thrown open for sale in early 1861 on Searancke's recommendation. A number of problems had arisen since the signing of the Te Awahou deeds some two years earlier. The gifts to Duncan and to Cook's children had been challenged.<sup>107</sup> Wereta had claimed land at Paretao and 'obstinately refused to cede it', and a portion of the block at Iwi te Kai had been occupied by Te Herekau of Ngati Whakaterere who was also requesting the extension of the reserve at Whakawehe.<sup>108</sup> Searancke believed that only European settlement would confirm the transfer of title. He considered that little was to be gained from withholding the block from sale when settlers were anxious to purchase land in the district, and he further advocated its opening on the grounds that:

the Natives themselves are most anxious to see settlers among them and are disappointed at the delay and openly state that as the Crown is not making use of the land they will resume possession; that its non-occupation is daily bringing forward fresh disputes, and that the settlement of Europeans amongst them will tend to distract their attention very much from other more exciting subjects, by giving them employment and its consequent pecuniary advantages, and the establishment of a healthy social intercourse between the two races.<sup>109</sup>

Searancke was not prepared to extend the reserve at Whakawehe, but recommended that a pre-emptive right be extended to Ngati Whakaterere over a 50-

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106. Searancke to McLean, 29 August 1860, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 71, p 296

107. Searancke to McLean, 6 August 1860, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 69, p 295

108. See Luiten, p 31; Searancke to McLean, 1 February 1861, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 78, p 302

109. Searancke to McLean, 1 February 1861, AJHR, 1861, C-1, no 79, p 302

*Wellington*

acre area adjacent to it. Such areas and disputed claims were to be excluded from the lands to be put on the market.

