OFFICIAL

Wai 898, #O13

WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

Wai 898, 457

IN THE MATTER OF The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF The Rohe Potae District Inquiry

AND Claims of the Tuhoro Whanau

EVIDENCE OF JOHN TUHORO

24 OCTOBER 2013

RECEIVED
Waitangi Tribunal
24 Oct 2013
Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

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> "We object to that road being taken over our land. This land is a gift to us (aroha) from the Ngati-Maniapoto people, because we were landless. It comprises 60 acres and there are 20 of us in the ittle. There are not over 30 persons living on it; as it is a Papa-kainga."

Introduction

1.1 My full name is John Tuhoro. I am one of triplets. My other siblings Janice, Joseph, Anthony and Tommy will also be speaking.

1.2 We are here because we have always heard that land had been unfairly taken from my great grandfather Tuhoro (Anatipa). My father Meihana the 2nd very seldom used this name. He always spoke of his father who is my grandad Meihana Tuwhainoa Tuhoro and the land that was stolen by the government at around the 1800s and the methods used to get their hands on his Whenua.

1.3 It wasn't until our whanau arranged this report by Bruce Stirling that we realized the full story of what had happened. It is amazing in how many different ways land was taken. Public works, Scenic Reserve, Roads, Schools, and straight out theft at the stroke of a pen.

1.4 I have great admiration for my sister and my younger brothers for the amount of work they have put into this report and the hours and time they have spent. This report reiterates time again how my great grandfather (Anatipa) and my grandfather Tuwhainoa Meihana, were men of few words but held Rangatiratanga status.

1.5 To me, reading through this report, they had great vision and only wanted to help their people as they could see a vision ahead and see what was going to happen.

1.6 The sad thing about this time of the century is that the government

of that era only had eyes on the land that they could take it any means possible whether it be by war of any the stroke of that mighty pen.

1.7 Now getting back to the time I had spent with my father. It was over a very long time when I was married to my wife Claudia Nell Tuhoro (deceased) as I had spent some time over the years trying to put myself together I won't go into too much detail on that subject.

1.8 My dad Meihana Uenuku Tuwhatu spent a lot of his time with me over a very long period while he was alive. Many of these times he talked about his land that was taken by the government i.e: for scenic reserves, for public works and even by some of his own whanau through court processes.

1.9 He and his sister Angina Tuhoro, were very young when his father died around 1923. He was only three at that time.

1.10 Most of his korero he obtained was from the elders, whanau and his mother Puhi, and Te Wharaunga, Parakihina (Aunty Leana as I know of her) and all of his older cousins, who told dad he was a wealthy man.

1.11 But as the years went by and he became old enough to understand most or nearly all of his whenua was taken by the Crown and through Land Court processes. Dad spent a lot of his time at the Maori Land Court for years trying to find his whenua and begging the judges to consider that a lot of his land was taken and not sold!

1.12 Heaps of times, Dad would come to my home in Hamilton, and ask me to drive him all over the country, for example Kawhia, Waitomo, Uekaha, Karu o te whenua, Kinohaku, Hauturu East, Rangitoto-Tuhua, Orahiri, and the Mangaronga block, where we attended some meetings.

1.13 Most of the time Dad would go to the Maori Affairs and his lawyer for money to feed his family and get money for education and clothes.

1.14 Many of these times when he visited me he would just sit and think about what happened to most his whenua he seemed quite lost and hurt that he had to beg for his money sometimes as they always said his monies went for this; surveying and other things even though the land was leased… plus his lawyer costs which seemed never ending.

1.15 One thing that did stand out for me was that when he went to some of these places he would bend down run his hands into the soil and rub it through his fingers and say a few words to himself.

1.16 I am devastated to finally learn about the way the government at that time handled our whanau, for the greed and sorrow that they suffered over all those years right through to 1948 and beyond and are still suffering from those actions today.

1.17 I am also amazed at the amount of land our whanau lost and not an apology to this day. Bruce's report talks about land at the Waitomo Caves were taken and the method used to obtain it (pg 20-50 and Map 30). Orahiri (which was the principal mana of Tuhoro: pg 84_115), the taking of parts of the Otorohanga Block (pg 119-127), Pokuru – which became part of the Tokanui Mental Hospital (pg128-136) and Rangitoto-Tuhua (pg 137-146) to name a few.

1.18 I was also amazed to discover how the government of that time and era set up different structures under name's like the Maori Land Board and then changed it the Maori Land Court only to suit themselves as another way of stealing more land off my whanau.

Triplets

1.19 It was one of the biggest news stories in the newspaper and radio in September 1943: "Triplets born in Otorohanga nursing home".

(O.C.) TE KUITI, this day.

For only the second time on record Maori triplets have been born in New Zealand, on this occasion to Mr. and Mrs. Tuhoro (nee Myrtle H. Tonga), of Otorohanga. The triplets, now just over one week old, were soon after birth named Peter, James and John, and weighed respectively 4lb, 4½lb and 5lb at birth. All are doing well. As the parents live in Maori style in a one-roomed cottage, and have already two other children under three years of age, an application was made for their admittance to a Karitane home, it is believed unsuccessfully so far. It will be impossible for the mother, under the circumstances, to attend to the triplets alone, without Government or other assistance, and it is hoped that the Government will come forward with the necessary aid so that the best possible can be done for the babies.

Auckland Star 22 September 1943

1.20 The sad part of this story is that when the three of us were born on 8 September 1943 my Mother & Father had to give us away to the Karitane home because of their situation which resulted from all the land he lost through no fault of his own. The people that I have heard stories from at that time said that the authorities decided that my father didn't have a whare for his extended family to go to, as Mum and Dad at that time where looking after three kids, my half-brother Haki Tongaporatu Neha and my two elder sisters Caroline and Marina.

1.21 I'm not sure if my grandmother was staying with them as well, as Dad was working at the Dairy Co in Otorohanga. We as triplets suffered the same as Mum and Dad knowing that we could never bond properly together again as my other siblings did.

1.22 We still feel that way… even after all these years. Today I am not blaming my siblings at all while reading this report as it is in our genes (handed down from my Tipuna) as they must have felt being alienated as my Mum and Dad did when the triplets arrived home.

1.23 At that time we did not understand what was happening as we kept calling the nurses in the Karitane home, Mum or Dad, whoever was around, so you can see while we and Mum and Dad were alienated from their children for five years.

Remedies

1.24 As a whanau, we have talked about what we would like to see happen from this Tribunal hearing. We understand that the current way of doing things is that there is likely to be a settlement with a central group. But we think that it's very important that the stories of whanau get recognized and that whanau feel that they have been heard. So our first request is that the Tribunal record our story in its report and stories of other whanau as it can so that the real cost of these Crown actions can be made clear. There should also be an apology to whanau who have been affected in this way.

1.25 We also think that whanau need access to resources when the situation happens that lands taken under public works come up for return, but money has to be paid for that. If that can't be paid, they can get offered back to the central settlement group. That process can raise all sorts of tensions and old wounds. So some thinking should be done about how to manage the interests of the whanau in those situations.

1.26 Finally, we think that there should be some sort of fund for whanau to access to reconnect and plan for their future – since that option was taken away by Crown actions. We are aware of the Whanau Ora programme and something like that might be a way to do this, but with a focus on restoration of whanau land and mana.

1.27 For example, I would personally like to see Te Rau Rau Iti a Haere rebuilt at its original site or a nearby site. The land behind the old home stead on Tuhoro street today has a scrap metal dealer using it - I think the name is Cole Recycling - most of those buildings could probably be condemned as an earthquake hazard. But there may be a nearby site as well. If Te Rau Rau Iti a Haere was rebuilt so our whanau could provide the awhi and manaaki that it once did.

John Tuhoro

24 October 2013