

# FARM TO INCORPORATION

ESTHER TINIRAU

## **HE MIHI**

*Aue! Aue!  
Kia tū ai au i ngā tūranga riri ki Rānana  
Ki runga o Moutoa  
Ko te rohe tēnā o Ngāti Ruakā*

*Ka rere atu kia tau au ki runga o Ruapehu  
Ki Ngā-Turi-o-Murimotu  
Ko te ahikā o Paerangi i te whare toka  
I puta mai ai Rangituhi, Rangiteauria me Uenuku-manawa-wiri  
E tū mai rā Tirorangi, Ngā Mōkai, Te Maungarongo e!*

Tēnei rā te mihi whānui a te mokopuna o Ngāti Ruakā, Ngāti Hine me Ngāti Rangi ki te hunga nā rātou te kaupapa o Morikau i tūmanakotia ai kia pupuru tonu mö ngā whakatipuranga. Ka tangi te ngākau ki rātou kua takahi atu rā i te ara kiri mātua. Moe mai rā koutou, okioki atu.

Ko te whenua nei a Morikau, he whenua ohakī i waihōia e ö tātou mātua tūpuna hei paihere i a tātou ki te kanohi o nanahi, ki te kanohi o näanei ki te kanohi mö äpöpö. Arā te kupu kōrero a töku korohēke a Paamu:

*Toitū te kupu  
Toitū te mana  
Toitū te whenua*

This project was completed for one of the under-graduate papers I undertook towards a Bachelor of Arts degree at Massey University in 1993. It outlines the history of the Morikau Farm and some of the events that led to the Morikaunui Incorporation. The land in question is situated at Rānana on the banks of Te Awanui-a-rua, approximately 55kms from the city of Whanganui.

The research originated through the influence of my father, Meterei Tinirau who at that time had been a member of the Morikaunui Incorporation for some years and remains so. I had attended some of the Annual General Meetings with Mum and Dad and often wondered about the genesis of Morikaunui. My study at Massey University offered an opportunity to research into this history.

It is a historical record of the Morikau Farm and outlines some of the tensions and circumstances that led to the Incorporation being formed in the 1950s. It is not the full story of Morikau. Rather it provides some historic background to some of the events that took place over the years. Many whānau have their own kōrero which hopefully will be shared so that future generations will understand the kaupapa of Morikau and the history behind it. Additionally, a number of reports are being written for the Whanganui land claims to the Waitangi Tribunal. Some of these reports contain more detail on the historical tensions between Whanganui Māori and the Crown with regard to Morikaunui lands and Atihau Incorporation lands.

Primarily this story is for the benefit of shareholders. Too many of us now live away from the lands and the relationship that we share with our whenua all too often is only realised through the form of an annual dividend. As an older generation passes on, so too does the kōrero. Uta Murphy-Peehi, Noel Bates, and Theresa Clifford come to mind as I write. For many years they had been associated with the Incorporation and assisted me when I first wrote this record. All three were amazing people and each had their own specific knowledge about Morikau and Atihau as well. That is not to forget many of our mātua who were instrumental in the running of the Farm in the early days and the establishment of the Incorporation, some of whom are mentioned in this report.

Nō reira e te iwi, tēnei e mihi kau ake. Tēnā koutou katoa.

The primary purpose of the Treaty of Waitangi was to guarantee to Māori the protection of their lands and end indiscriminate sales to Europeans. Apart from Governor Fitzroy's brief attempt at waiving the Crown's right of pre-emption in 1844, this system continued right up until 1862.

## NATIVE LAND COURT

The 1862 Native Land Act provided for the establishment of Courts for the purpose of ascertaining and declaring who were owners of a block of Māori land. The act however was shortlived. It was replaced in 1865 by the Native Lands Act which set up a Native Land Court. Apart from any restrictions the Court may have laid on the land, the owners, or at least the 10 names on the title, were free to lease or sell lands as they liked. "The object of the Native Lands Act was two-fold: to bring the great bulk of the lands in the Northern Island which belonged to Māoris ... within the reach of colonisation" and to destroy tribalism which stood as a barrier to "amalgamate the Māori race into our social and political system."<sup>1</sup>

Investigations to title in which tribal or hapū groups had to prove ownership to a block, were held throughout the country. Applications were made to the court by owners and the intention to hear the investigation was gazetted in *Te Kahiti o Niu Tireni*.<sup>2</sup> Evidence was heard by the judge in which:

the tribal or hapu groups established their ownership under the accepted tenets of customary title. Where there was no disagreement, the judge had merely to confirm the lists of ownership handed in to him by the representatives of the various tribal or hapū groups. The principal pattern followed was that each hapū group or tribe endeavoured to set-up either an ancestor who was known and recognised as having the dominion of the block, or other relatives associated with the block.<sup>3</sup>

Under this Act, the Morikau Block was surveyed and brought before the Native Land Court in 1899.<sup>4</sup> Totalling approximately 24,100 acres, Morikau was partitioned into two separate blocks – Morikau 1 and Morikau 2.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, N, 1960, *Māori Land Law*, Reed, Wellington.

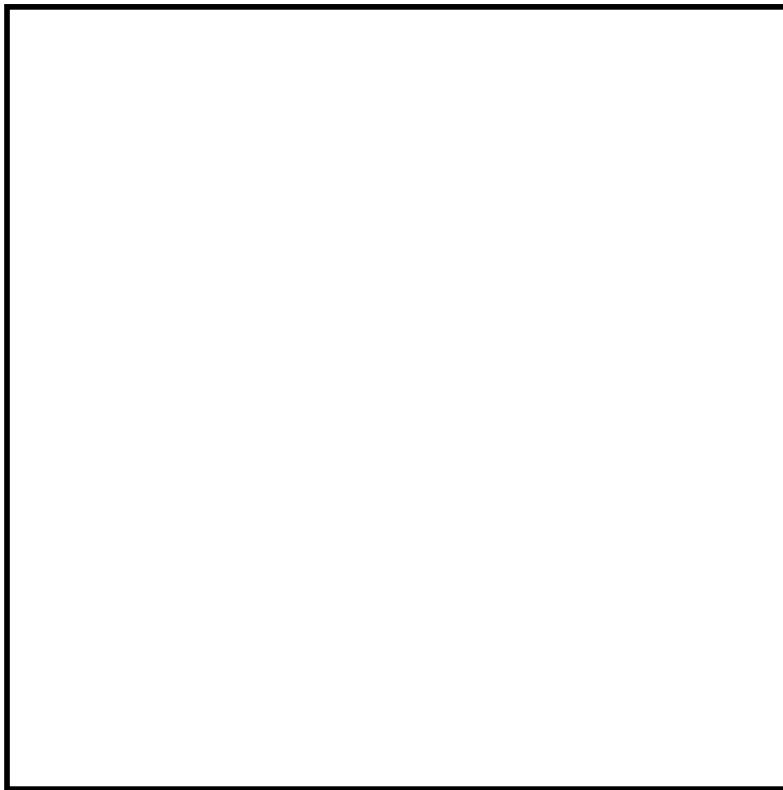
<sup>2</sup> The New Zealand Gazette was published in Māori under this title.

<sup>3</sup> Sinclair, D, 1981, "Land since the Treaty: the nibble, the bite, the swallow", in *Te Ao Hurihuri*, ed. Michael King, Longman Paul Ltd, Auckland, p114.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A for an outline of the Native Land Court case.

<sup>5</sup> Note that Morikau 2 is now one of the land blocks included in the Atihau Incorporation

## MAP 1 – MORIKAU BLOCK<sup>6</sup>



Near the end of the 1800s, concern by Māori owners pertaining to the rate of land alienation, led to a consolidation of Māori opinion in meetings held throughout the North Island.<sup>7</sup>

Petitions were presented to parliament regarding the future administration of Māori lands and although divided on many points, the tribes were unanimous in asking:

- (i) that the Crown cease the purchase of Native lands;
- (ii) that the adjudication, management and administration of the remnant of their lands be vested in controlling Councils, Boards or Committees composed of representative Māori.<sup>8</sup>

As a consequence of these events, a conference was held in 1897 at Pūtiki Marae, Whanganui. The Native Minister, Sir James Carroll, met with assembled Māori to determine the preservation of Māori land for Māori and their future generations.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Sketch Plan WD1444, Department of Lands and Survey, Palmerston North. Presented to the Court at the Investigation to Title, 1899.

<sup>7</sup> Stout-Ngata Commission Report in *AJHR*, 1907, G1c.

<sup>8</sup> Stout-Ngata Commission Report in *AJHR*, 1907, G1c.

## **VESTING OF MÄORI LAND**

A direct result of this conference was the 1900 Mäori Lands Administration Act. It was the first of several acts which provided for the vesting of lands. The act established Mäori-dominated land councils in which Mäori land could be vested by owners for leasing. According to the 1951 Report of the Royal Commission on Mäori Lands Vested in Mäori Land Boards, the Aotea Mäori Land district was the only region where this act was substantially used. Approximately 100,000 acres was vested voluntarily in the Council by Mäori owners, including the Morikau 2 block.

## **AOTEA MÄORI LAND BOARD**

The 1905 Mäori Land Settlement Act was the next major statute providing for the vesting of Mäori lands. This act set-up Mäori Land Boards which superseded the Mäori Land Councils. However, the Mäori representation had become a minority with only one Mäori voice of the three members that constituted the Board.

It is through the Aotea Mäori Land Board that the Morikau farm commenced. Investigations for the Stout-Ngata Commission<sup>10</sup> in 1907 led to Apirana Ngata and Robert Stout recommending that the Ranana and Ngäräkauwhakarä blocks be vested in the Board. During the course of their enquiries they had identified that Europeans were in the process of negotiating leases for large tracts of land within and surrounding the Morikau area.

Enquiry today elicited facts which warrant us urgently recommending you to vest in aotea board [R]anana block 3100 acres ... and [N]garakauwhakarara block 4995 acres ... Europeans under negotiations for leases. In former block natives propose [to] lease 2000 acres ... and in latter they propose [to] lease 4000 acres to Europeans ...<sup>11</sup>

By May 1907, the land block Morikau 1 (7200 acres) and the adjoining blocks, Ranana (3100 acres) and Ngäräkauwhakarä (4995 acres) were vested in the Board under the 1906 Mäori Land Settlement Act Amendment Act.<sup>12</sup> Whereas Mäori

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<sup>9</sup> The investigation to title of the Morikau block was heard in 1899 and the wish that the land be totally inalienable was reiterated in the case.

<sup>10</sup> Both these men were involved in the Stout-Ngata Commission which was appointed in 1907. Their role was to inquire and report as to how areas of Mäori lands which were unoccupied or not profitably occupied could best be utilised and settled in the interest of the Native owners.

<sup>11</sup> Telegram from Stout and Ngata to Hon J Carroll, 23 March 1907.

<sup>12</sup> It is not known whether owners were consulted when the lands were vested. Judging by documents perused by the writer, it appears that some were and some were not.

formerly vested lands *voluntarily*, sections 3 and 4 of this Act authorised the Governor in Council to vest lands in any Māori land board where:

- (a) the lands had not been properly cleared of noxious weeds; or
- (b) where they were not properly occupied by the Māori owners but were suitable for Māori settlement.<sup>13</sup>

While the Stout-Ngata recommendation was an attempt to protect the interests of owners, the management of the land was effectively transferred to the Aotea Māori Land Board.

In 1908 a meeting was held at the Aotea Māori Land Board's office with representatives of the three blocks. Wiki Keepa and Wi Pauro spoke on behalf of those present. They relayed to the Board, the owners' intentions with regard to developing the land. For each block, it was stated that the portions would be set aside as papakāinga areas and the remaining acreage would then be worked under an incorporation system by owners. Members of three committees (for Ranana, Morikau and Ngäräkauwhakarä) had been appointed by the owners and the Board was asked to give these committees full powers for administering the respective blocks. The Board's response however was negative:

it seems clear that the blocks in question are vested in the Board under the special clauses of the Acts ... and the land has to be leased by the Board to the Native owners or their nominees, ... the Board cannot have the lands dealt with under the system of incorporated owners ...<sup>14</sup>

The board added that they could see no difficult in accepting the names that had been handed in as committees for various blocks, and that these committees would assist in carrying into effect the proposals which they and the Board may agree upon.

Dissatisfied with this response, Wiki Keepa and Wi Pauro stated that unless owners were to have absolute control of mortgages and the working of the lands, they were not prepared to continue with discussions and the meeting abruptly ended.

The above disagreement was to be indicative of the power that the Board had over the management of the lands in subsequent years.

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<sup>13</sup> AJHR, 1951, G5, p16. Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon matters and questions relating to certain leases of Māori lands vested in Māori land boards.

<sup>14</sup> Minutes of meeting held at Whanganui, 21 May 1908, Aotea Māori Land Board Office.

By 1909, section 292 of the Native Land Act automatically empowered Māori land Boards to farm vested lands if it was thought to be of benefit for the owners.<sup>15</sup>

## MORIKAU FARM

Eager to commence farming operations on Morikau 1, the Board sent a surveyor to Jerusalem in 1910. He was to report on and survey the block. However, some members of the hapū, Ngāti Hau, prevented him from carrying out his work. Due to lack of consultation on the Board's part, the owners were not informed of the purpose of the surveyor's visit and were therefore convinced that the Government were taking their lands. Takarangi Metekingi was approached by the Board to outline to the people the reasons for the surveyor's visit. Following his explanation, work was allowed to proceed and the farming scheme began.

The purpose of the farm was to establish and proceed with farming operations for the benefit and education of the beneficial owners. It provided an opportunity for owners to acquire a knowledge of practical farming. A committee comprised of owners was formed to protect the interests of all owners and to assist the Manager, Gregor McGregor, in the purchase and sale of stock.

Two years later, sections of the Ngārākauwhakarārā and Ranana blocks were included in the scheme along with 200 acres of the nearby Mairehau block. In order to obtain a mortgage for development however, the title of the land had to be transferred to the Board. An amount of 32,000 pounds was approved by the Native Minister to proceed with the augmentation of the farm and to assist owners to improve the papakāinga areas.<sup>16</sup> Initially described as being in a “bad condition”, the farm was developed over the years with the buying of stock and clearing sections of gorse, bush, noxious weeds and blackberry. However, the Māori owners did not acquire the skills of farming and by 1917, not one was employed on the farm.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Native Land Act, 1909.

<sup>16</sup> Memorandum from the Aotea District Māori Land Board to Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, 14 August 1913. The papakāinga areas for the three blocks was approximately 3,000 acres and were divided into small sections for owners to farm.

<sup>17</sup> Memorandum from Aotea District Māori Land Board to Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, 4 October 1917.

### Acquiring Land for Returned Soldiers

In the same year, the Morikau farm was being considered as suitable for settlement. The President of the Board wrote to the Native Minister stating that:

... the object for which the farm was first established has failed or has been lost sight of, and  
... it is at the present time serving no very useful purpose. The Native owners get nothing out of it, take no interest in it, and I think might be willing to divest themselves of it.

He went on to recommend that in view of the above, the Crown should acquire the land for the settlement of returned soldiers from World War I.

His assertions that the farm was not serving a useful purpose, did not however, correspond with an earlier report by Gregor McGregor. He informed the Board that apart from the lack of roads and tracks, the farm was doing well – even to the extent of possibly offering profit distribution to beneficial owners. He also reported that although handicapped by lack of funds, some of the owners were showing a ‘marked improvement’<sup>18</sup> in developing their sections.

The purchase did not eventuate. For an unknown reason the Board decided not to proceed with the deal. It would appear that the vesting of the land through the 1906 Māori Settlement Act Amendment Act provided a protection mechanism for the alienation of the land. Further research is required in order to confirm this.

### Dairying Scheme

By 1924 the President of the Board, concerned about the state of the ‘River Natives’, wrote to the Minister of Native Affairs expressing that:

Unless something be done soon to help the River Natives to get on their feet, I am sure that they will die out within another generation or so. They are in a most impecunious (having little or not money) state at present ...<sup>19</sup>

To remedy this situation, he suggested that a comprehensive dairying scheme could commence on the farm. Māori representatives from hapū along the River had unanimously agreed that “every effort should be made to start dairying on all suitable lands along the River”.<sup>20</sup> Some owners were already milking cows which provided a

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum from Aotea District Māori Land Board to Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, 14 January 1924.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Hui held at Jerusalem, December 1923.

small income and the President believed that the scheme would be in their best interests. It was surmised that with improvements, the farm, and adjoining lands held by Māori totalling approximately 1600 acres, could sustain roughly 2000 cows. Another objective was that a milk factory be erected at Ranana. This was to alleviate the costs of transportation and the risk that in a dry season, the river may be too low for transportation of cream to the Whanganui factory.

A feasibility report was obtained from the Department of Agriculture which commented on the viability of the project. In summary, the report was not favourable due to the large areas of gorse and blackberry on the lands and the expense of eradication.

Despite the disappointment which would have arisen from this report, another attempt to assist owners was being considered later that year.

### **PARTITIONING OF BLOCKS**

In July 1924, the President of the Board wrote to the Under-Secretary of the Native Department setting out a proposal to grant freehold titles to owners. With regard to the lands being vested in the Board, he stated that:

... the Native owners have not the free use of it and have been unable to do anything with it and as the farm has not been paying have been deriving no revenue from [the farm] ... the only thing to save them from starvation and extinction is to be given an opportunity to work a portion of their own lands ...<sup>21</sup>

It was proposed that approximately 3000 acres of the Morikau, Ranana and Ngārākauwhakarārā blocks would be partitioned into freehold titles for owners. Also suggested was that “if each family ran a few cows on its section, sent the cream to Wanganui and had a little money coming in from that source it would place them in an infinitely better position than they are...”<sup>22</sup> Freehold titles on the various sections would enable owners to raise mortgages to develop the land and what little income they received from the cream, part would be used to repay the encumbrances of the mortgage. As with the aforementioned dairying scheme proposal, this one was met

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<sup>21</sup> Memorandum from Aotea District Māori Land Board to Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, 11 July 1924.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

with enthusiasm by the owners. While satisfied that the majority would make an attempt to succeed, the President was certain that there would be a “few failures”.<sup>23</sup>

In his memorandum, it was pointed out that the proposed sections were not ideal for dairying. The land, to a large extent, was covered with gorse and blackberry – the eradication of which would require considerable expenditure in labour and money. Additional to this was the expense of fencing and stocking the sections.

A question arises here regarding the use of the original mortgage. Apart from developing the land and buying stock, the Board’s justification was that some would be used for the papakainga areas:

Another matter requiring funds is the improvement of certain papakainga areas in each of the blocks totalling about 3000 acres and situated close to the Māori settlement of Ranana and Jerusalem ... The natives to whom the areas have been allotted have not the funds required to improve the areas and are looking to the Board to assist them in the way of providing material and implements. If these areas are properly treated they would in a few years be made fit for dairying.<sup>24</sup>

However, the owners had received no assistance for their papakainga – a point that was outlined in a memorandum to the Native Minister by the Under-Secretary. He was critical of the Board and was inclined to think that “the Board has not kept that grip over the expenditure that it should have done.”<sup>25</sup> He went on to add that:

It would be calamitous if the Board has to admit that the result of its 14 years management has resulted in nothing but a heavy liability being placed on the land.

On the other hand if there is no hope of the farming operations being made a success, the failure of the Board should be admitted and the Natives assisted to retrieve their land from the burden placed on it by the Board before it is too late to do so.<sup>26</sup>

Despite his misgivings the management of the farm remained with the Board and the case for partitioning the blocks was heard in 1925 at the Whanganui Māori Land Court.

Owners commenced dairying operations with financial assistance from two dairy companies but were handicapped at the outset by high costs, insufficient equipment,

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<sup>23</sup> ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Memorandum from Aotea District Māori Land Board to Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, 14 August 1913.

<sup>25</sup> Memorandum from Aotea District Māori Land Board to Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, 2 July 1924.

<sup>26</sup> Memorandum from Aotea District Māori Land Board to Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, 2 July 1924.

lack of experience and proper supervision. By 1929 however, legislation was enacted which provided Government funding to assist Māori farmers to develop their lands.

## RANANA DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The 1929 Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act provided for the:

better settlement and more effective utilization of Native land or land owned or occupied by Natives and the encouragement of Natives in the promotion of agricultural pursuits.<sup>27</sup>

Under section 23 of this Act, the Ranana Development Scheme began which included the 1925 partitions. Comprising 72 sub-divisions of the Ngārākauwhakarārā, Ranana and Morikau 1 blocks the total area in the scheme was 4,496 acres (Appendix B) – 2,718 acres of which was occupied by owners.

Early expenditure which was necessarily heavy, was principally incurred on such items as buildings and fencing materials, seed, manure, farm implements and dairy equipment.<sup>28</sup>

The only source of income for the owners was the cream cheque received from the dairy company in Whanganui. From this, an instalment had to be paid towards the mortgage on the land and scarcely enough remained to buy everyday necessities: flour, sugar, tea, let alone clothing. In commenting on the expense of groceries, Hoeroa Marumaru, the Scheme's supervisor, stated that "These are necessities to any community, and in our instance the cost to the consumer is high, due to the high freight charges."<sup>29</sup> He explained that until the river road was completed, that freight charges by steamer would not be reduced and that every endeavour should be made to expedite the road works.

Initially, the scheme was effective. A report by Hoeroa Marumaru in 1933 stated that the scheme was one of the "most beneficial movements ever inaugurated for the good of the Māoris on the Whanganui River".<sup>30</sup> He was confident that with assistance by the Government, the Ranana Development Scheme would be a success.

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<sup>27</sup> Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act, 1929.

<sup>28</sup> AJHR, 1936, G10, pp34-35.

<sup>29</sup> AJHR, 1933, G10E, p3.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

By the 1940s, however, the scheme was affected by the recession and World War II. During the war, wives and parents strove to maintain the properties in full production. Nevertheless, the shortage of manpower and materials did not permit any increase in development operations. Blackberry and gorse began to overtake the grazing areas for the cows and by the end of the 1940s the scheme had become uneconomic and the majority of owners, unable to repay mortgages, vacated their sections and the land reverted to the Department of Māori Affairs.

The administration of these lands continued until the 1990s when the lands were returned to the owners.

### PROCESS TO INCORPORATION

In 1948 Hoeroa Marumaru approached the Acting Minister of Māori Affairs, the Rt Hon W Nash, and advised that owners wished to have more say in the administration and control of the farm. The Under-Secretary pointed out to the Minister, the limited powers of the owners:

How effective the Committee [of owners] is, and what part it plays in the management, does not appear, but, as a matter of law, it probably does not count for very much because if any conflict arose between it and the Board, the board must necessarily prevail.<sup>31</sup>

He went on to advise that the owners' wishes could be met by incorporation. A matter that needed to be decided on, was whether the Morikau Station should be run by one incorporation or whether there would be three separate farms run by three distinct incorporations – one for each of the three blocks within the farm (Ranana, Ngārākauwhakarārā, Morikau 1).

By 1952, the Under-Secretary for Māori Affairs asked the Aotea District Māori Land Board what steps had been taken to hand over control of the Station to the Māori owners. The President replied that no steps had been taken because the owners have "no apparent desire to assume control" and that the control of the land should remain with the Board until:

- (a) there is a definite desire of the owners for some alternative method of control;
- (b) the owners have sufficiently experienced of their numbers able and willing to assume the responsibilities of management.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Memorandum from Under-Secretary of Māori Affairs, 17 December 1948.

His statement that there was “no desire to assume control” by the owners was in direct contrast to Marumaru’s representation to the Minister of Māori Affairs in 1948. Perhaps it was an attempt by the Board to retain control of the farm.

The Under-Secretary responded confidentially by saying that legislation was under way which would halt all farming operations presently carried out by Māori Land Boards. The legislation, however, could not be enacted until the Boards divested themselves of the properties that they were farming. Eventually when control and administration was restored to Māori owners, adequate steps would be taken to ensure the continued utilisation of the land and protection of the owners’ assets. In addition, he questioned paragraph (b) of the President’s memorandum:

Is it a fact that … there are not amongst the owners a few people of experience and common sense which would be needed for a committee of management?

He remarked that the reasons set out in the President’s memorandum were not considered to be sufficient to warrant a departure from returning the land to the owners and that “every effort should be made to have the Māori Land Board divested of its control as soon as possible …”<sup>33</sup>

The process towards incorporating began, and in August 1953, a meeting of owners was held at Putiki Marae, Whanganui. There was a unanimous decision by those present that the land be revested in the owners and that it be kept as one farm and the blocks amalgamated.<sup>34</sup> An application was made to the Māori Land Court to consolidate and repartition the three blocks. The intention of this was to remove the existing titles and revest to owners the lands within the farm through one title. It was an attempt to avoid disputes in the future over apportionment of profits and improvements.

On 19 November 1953, the following blocks were consolidated and now form the Morikaunui Block. On 4 April 1955, an Order of Incorporation was made at the Māori Land Court under section 271 of the 1953 Māori Affairs Act. The object of the Incorporation was “to enable the land to be occupied and managed as a farm for the

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<sup>32</sup> Letter from President of Aotea District Māori Land Board to Under-Secretary of Māori Affairs, 3 April 1952.

<sup>33</sup> Memorandum from Under-Secretary of Māori Affairs to President of Aotea District Māori Land Board, 13 May 1952.

purpose of carrying on any agricultural or pastoral business.”<sup>35</sup> The first Committee of management for the Morikaunui Incorporation was appointed in 1955 by a meeting of the incorporated owners:

Whakaari Te Rangitākuku Metekingi (Chair)  
Hori Hipango  
Hikaia Amohia  
Whatarangi Pohe  
Tahi Tapa  
Hera Scott  
K Arahanga

## **WHANGANUI TRUST**

In 1959, Rangi Metekingi, Chair of the Incorporation approached the Minister of Māori Affairs. He suggested that an Educational Endowment Fund be established from the uneconomic interests of owners and that such a fund would be managed by the Incorporation. His primary initiative was to ensure educational assistance for future generations and to assist owners with funds for housing. The idea was met with enthusiasm from the Minister and his Department and although it took several years to transpire, in 1966, the Whanganui Trust was formed under the 1957 Charitable Trusts Act. While originally it consisted of monies from uneconomic interests of owners, eventually, all unclaimed monies for lands within the Morikaunui Block was also added.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Aotea Māori Land Board failed to achieve the original purpose of the farm and that was to educate owners in becoming farmers. Instead, the owners became the labourers – scrubcutters, shearers and cowmilkers.

While attempts of assistance by the Board to “save the Māori from starvation and extinction”, may have been sincere, they proved unsuccessful through lack of support and finance. The individualisation of title to the land (Ranana Development Scheme), while initially providing subsistence, was ineffective. The land became uneconomical because the sections were small and could not carry the required stock to produce the revenue to keep the land in a profitable state.

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<sup>34</sup> See Appendix C for minutes of hui.

Despite representations by owners for more input in matters affecting the land, they were stifled by the legislative process that ensured the Aotea Māori Land Board's continued authority.

The restoration of control to owners in the form of a Committee of Management was opportune. Rangi Metekingi, through his involvement in the New Zealand Māori Council and the New Zealand Planning Council, provided strong leadership over the years that he was Chair. The first committee of management and subsequent committees have continued to administer the Morikaunui Incorporation on behalf of shareholders.

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<sup>35</sup> Whanganui Minute Book 114, p137.