

Bolger, 1998

NZ Wars

BOLGER

A VIEW FROM THE TOP



27 years as Prime Minister

BOLGER

PNZ

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BOLGER – A VIEW FROM THE TOP

understanding that the outlines of a deal were there, although the details would be very difficult. In the weeks that followed, Doug Graham, assisted by Doug Kidd, patiently negotiated the details of the settlement. I got involved at various points along the way.

One time I was called in was when the Maori negotiators sought to have 50 per cent of the non-allocated fish under New Zealand's fish quota arrangements retained for Maori. I told the negotiators that wasn't acceptable, but I was prepared to seek agreement on 20 per cent of the non-allocated fish. That subsequently was accepted.

The eventual settlement lifted a heavy grievance from the shoulders of Maori. The joint venture has succeeded in every sphere. The original asset has grown five times in value from \$200 million to nearly \$1 billion. That success has consigned to the dustbins of history the arguments of those who said that if the Maori got the fish, the industry would be ruined and Maori would squander their new inheritance.

There is one important and difficult issue still to be resolved. The settlement was a pan-Maori settlement; in other words a settlement for all Maori. It has yet to be resolved by Maori how to allocate the benefits of the settlement among different iwi.



The Tainui settlement was quite different. Tainui had patiently negotiated for years with earlier governments but to no avail. The historical facts were better known. Alleged provocation by Tainui led the government of the day to confiscate over one million acres of prime Waikato land in 1863. After many months of patient negotiation Doug Graham rang me at Te Kuiti as the family gathered there for Christmas 1994. We discussed the progress of the negotiations and he sought my approval to sign the heads of agreement that evening. I agreed. It was a great Christmas present.

those who acted in the time discussing with of be met. In the end we ca to Tainui and to Bucking Parliament, it would inc visit New Zealand for Meeting, would on my a give the Royal Assent by Governor-General. That s House on 3 November 1

As the legislation wa day on 22 May 1995 v Maori MP Koro Tainui V arrived at Turangawaewa Tainui people. I was the Te Arikinui Dame Te Atair of the occasion was over Doug Graham, in an in historic sculptured bird Tainui believe Korotangi have been brought to Ne of the great migration. It New Zealand. We had a se been achieved.

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The settlement were of particular importance in principle, 'As land was taken, land should be returned. An important element was that the Tainui people were Queen for the wrong and the hurt that they would be constitutionally unique. The settlement was a bit of apologising for the misdeeds of

those who acted in the Crown's name. Doug Graham and I spent time discussing with officials how this requirement of Tainui could be met. In the end we came up with a suggestion that was acceptable to Tainui and to Buckingham Palace. When the Bill was passed through Parliament, it would include a full apology. Her Majesty, who was to visit New Zealand for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, would on my advice as her Prime Minister in New Zealand give the Royal Assent by signing the legislation herself instead of the Governor-General. That signing ceremony took place in Government House on 3 November 1995 and honour was preserved on all sides.

As the legislation was signed I recalled the overcast and drizzly day on 22 May 1995 when myself, Doug Graham, the Western Maori MP Koro Tainui Wetere and a very large number of others arrived at Turangawaewae Marae at Ngaruawahia to meet with the Tainui people. I was there to sign the settlement agreement with Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu, the Maori Queen. The emotion of the occasion was overwhelming, and never more so than when Doug Graham, in an inspired move, returned to the Tainui the historic sculptured bird Korotangi from the National Museum. Tainui believe Korotangi to be more than 1000 years old and to have been brought to New Zealand in the Tainui canoe at the time of the great migration. It was a special moment on a special day for New Zealand. We had a sense of joy knowing something good had been achieved.

The Ngai Tahu settlement was long, tortuous, and complex and took over six years to negotiate. More than once the negotiators lost patience with one another. There was enormous pressure on both sides to be constantly making concessions so as to make progress. At times this would get too much and angry words would be spoken and the negotiations would grind to a halt. I understood the pressures and when I deemed it right I would talk independently to the parties to remove the roadblocks so as to bring the parties back together quietly. Simon Murdoch, the Chief Executive of my Department, was a tower of strength at times like this. He clearly was scrupulously fair because at various times he annoyed both sides. He is an outstanding public servant. Ultimately, of

