

REPORTS ON SETTLEMENT OF CONFISCATED LANDS.

BAY OF PLENTY.

No. 1.

Mr. J. A. WILSON to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 7th November, 1871.

I have the honor, in accordance with your instructions, to submit herewith the following memoranda in reference to the settlement of various outstanding land affairs in the confiscated block known as the "Bay of Plenty District."

In consequence of the disturbed state of some portions of the district three years ago, several awards of land remained unselected and unsurveyed at that time. I cannot remember the number of those unsettled awards; but a schedule of them was then prepared by me, and delivered to the Hon. Dr. Pollen, at Auckland.

This schedule is one of sixteen schedules of awards, &c., containing many hundred Native names, that are now mislaid, and are not to be found at Wellington, to which place I was informed they had been sent. Fortunately, however, I have preserved in Auckland my private memoranda of these things, and catalogues of names, and shall be able to supply the missing data.

The outstanding affairs referred to may be very well settled, now that danger has ceased in that part of the country. There are also one or two disputes about eel-weirs that require to be arranged.

In carrying out the foregoing, some small surveys will be necessary. I would suggest that the convenient course formerly pursued in the district in reference to surveys be adopted—viz., that Mr. Heale and myself be instructed to co-operate. Such arrangement would also possess the advantage of securing uniformity with the extensive surveys already made.

I would observe that a large number of Crown grants for land in the district remain unissued, notwithstanding the schedules have been signed for them more than three years ago.

The issue of Crown grants for the allotments sold in 1868 in the township of Richmond is a matter requiring attention. The allotments were paid for in the majority of instances at the time of the sale, and a title should be given with them, as disputes have arisen through sales and resales in the absence of deeds.

I would respectfully recommend that the preliminary Commission to examine me, required by the second, third, and fourth clauses of "The Richmond Lands Act, 1870," be convened in Auckland as the more convenient place, because Dr. Pollen, who is cognizant of the circumstances, resides there, and because my papers, vouchers, &c., connected with the business are there also; and that, on the receipt of the report of the Commission, the grants—some two or three hundred in number—may be immediately issued in the manner provided by the above-mentioned Act. This may be the more speedily effected, as they only require signature, having been prepared by Mr. Sinclair, in whose office they may be found.

I have, &c.,

J. A. WILSON.

No. 2.

The Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER to Mr. J. A. WILSON.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 13th November, 1871.

In answer to your letter of the 7th instant, submitting some memoranda with respect to various outstanding land affairs in the Bay of Plenty District, I have the honor to inform you that I consider some conclusion should be arrived at with respect to such claims, especially those about Opotiki and Whakatane, and that the unsettled awards should be finally arranged.

From the experience you acquired while acting for the Government in that district, I am led to request you to undertake the completion of the arrangements which have not all as yet been brought to an end. For this purpose you will be able to procure information bearing on the subject from Dr. Pollen, who will also instruct you as to the detail of duties to be carried out.

Your suggestion that the course to be adopted with regard to some small necessary surveys should be similar to that previously in operation—namely, that Captain Heale should be instructed to co-operate with you—is approved, and that officer will be instructed accordingly.

I shall be glad of a schedule of the Crown grants for land remaining unissued in the district, with a view to their being issued as soon as possible, all requisite preliminaries with regard to them having been carried out.

With respect to your statement that you are to be examined by the preliminary Commission under "The Richmond Lands Sale Act, 1870," I do not find in that Act any specific mention of your intended examination, but I gather from the tenor of the Act that your evidence will be valuable.

Your suggestion as to the Commission being held in Auckland is reasonable, and will be complied with.

It is expected that the completion of the duties intrusted to you will be effected as speedily as possible, as it is of the utmost importance that the district should be available at an early date for colonization and settlement.