

PAPERS RELATING TO AN ALLEGED SALE OF AURIFEROUS LAND AT SWITZERS.

No. 1.

Mr. J. B. BRADSHAW to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

House of Representatives, Wellington, 18th October, 1871.

It has been brought to my notice, by residents of the Switzers District, that a piece of auriferous land, of fifty acres, has been disposed of by the Waste Lands Board of the Province of Otago, to one Allan McDonald. Also, that a very serious injury thereby has been done to the mining community by the sale of this known auriferous land, as well as the sale of improvements affected on the said piece of land, without any compensation being allowed to the owners thereof.

I have, therefore, the honor to request you will be so good as to cause an inquiry to be made into the whole matter, and in the meantime to cause the Crown grants or certificates of sale to be withheld until the inquiry shall have been made. I enclose, for your information, two letters, from Mr. Shaw, of Switzer's, relative to the subject, dated respectively 29th September and 6th October, 1871.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

J. B. BRADSHAW.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

Mr. R. SHAW to Mr. J. B. BRADSHAW.

SIR,—

Switzers, 29th September, 1871.

I telegraphed to you on the 23rd instant relative to a Crown grant of fifty acres, applied for by Allan McDonald; I also telegraphed to Mr. Thomson in Dunedin, asking him if the land had been sold. Mr. Thomson's reply is—

“Sold, 13th May last; Crown grants not yet issued.—J. T. THOMSON, Ch. Comr. C. and B.”

I have now to inform you that this land was applied for, some years ago, by Wm. Acton, who went to considerable expense in obtaining runholder's consent, private survey, &c. The Government of that day promptly refused to sell the land. McDonald must have applied under Acton's old survey, as no fresh survey has been held.

Some of the miners remember seeing an application in the papers for fifty acres by McDonald, in April last, but as locality was stated to be Hinden, 100 miles from here, no notice was taken of the affair. There is a departure here from the recognized rule, as the application is usually made through the Wardens' Courts: our Mr. Warden Wood is in blissful ignorance of the whole transaction. There is a deep lead of gold running right through the aforesaid land; and to show you that such is not a myth, about last Christmas, the Break'em-all claim was running forty, fifty, and sixty ounces per week.

There are besides several improvements on the ground. I may mention one place built for a public-house, but not yet licensed; no doubt the owner thought he was building on Crown land.

It is reported that McDonald has sold the land to Bastings and Simpson. I will conclude by copying the resolution of the Switzers Miners' Protection Association:—

“That Mr. Bradshaw be written to, to take steps to prevent the issue of Crown grant of fifty acres of auriferous land, formerly applied for by William Acton, and sold to A. McDonald, and to cause a prompt and searching inquiry to be made in reference to the said sale.

“As our representative, we respectfully request you to take this matter in hand, and sift it to the bottom, as from the feeling of the people on the subject, I am satisfied it will not be let drop easily.”

I am, &c.,

R. SHAW,

Mr. J. B. Bradshaw, M.H.R.

Secretary, S.M.P. Association.

P.S.—The Chinese petition from Switzers I think I shall be able to forward you next mail. Pray, is the Government likely to interfere to stop the further increase of these Celestials? I think there will be a row some day over it. I was requested by the Committee to ask you for copies of the questions to the Wardens on Chinese immigration.

R. S.

Enclosure 2 in No. 1.

Mr. R. SHAW to Mr. J. B. BRADSHAW.

SIR,—

Switzers, 6th October, 1871.

I am instructed by the Committee to request you will be kind enough to have forwarded to Secretary the *New Zealand Government Gazette*.

I may mention that a *Hansard* was talked about, but I suppose it would be asking too much to trouble you on the subject.