

No. 12.

The Hon. D. McLEAN to LIEUT.-COLONEL McDONNELL.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 30th November, 1871.

With reference to the instructions conveyed to you, in conjunction with Mr. Booth, to make enquiries as to the possibility of purchase from Natives of certain lands for the purpose of settlement, I have the honor to direct your attention to a block between the Mangawera and Wangaehu rivers, estimated to contain somewhere about 20,000 acres. In purchases of this nature, it is of the utmost importance that careful enquiry should first be made among the Native owners as to the prospects of completing the transaction without incurring the chance of any future trouble or disagreement.

You will, therefore, have to pay special attention to this, as the Government do not desire to acquire any land from the Natives, however valuable it may be, if the acquisition is attended with any risk of disturbance or revival of feuds among themselves.

You will proceed to examine this block, and report fully upon its capabilities, whether for grass, or corn lands, for timber, water, and any other points which it is desirable to be fully aware of.

You will also have the goodness to furnish the Under Secretary for Public Works with a rough sketch of it, as accurate as the circumstances will allow you to make, giving its proper boundaries; and in enumerating the latter, you will be very careful to ascertain that no mistakes can in future occur between the proposed settlers and the Government, but that a clear definition is given of the area with its limits.

You will also give me a clear idea as to what reserves it will be necessary to make for the Natives, in the case of these, discriminating most carefully their acreage. I have to request that you will lose no time in acquiring the information, and forwarding a report of it to the Government.

Should anything in the transactions occur affecting the Natives, I have to request that you will forward to me a copy of the report you furnish to the Under Secretary for Public Works.

I have, &c.,

DONALD McLEAN.

Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell, Wanganui.

No. 13.

Lieut.-Colonel McDONNELL to the UNDER SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

Wanganui, 12th December, 1871.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report that, accompanied by a Native, yesterday I rode out to have a look at the Pikopiko block of 3,600 acres. From what I saw, it appears to be a rough and thickly-wooded country, with only a few acres of flat land here and there. The available track to it is from the left bank of the Wanganui river, and a good road could be made this way to it for a trifling sum. The timber on the block will be valuable for fire wood, as it is near town, and though the land is hilly, the soil is of fair quality. I find on enquiry, that the Natives have only a leasing title to this piece of country. Should the Government think of purchasing, and would wait for a few weeks, or perhaps days, I think some better land might be purchased, to include this block. There are 1,652 acres, Waimatau; 310 acres, Moetanga; and 900 acres, Mangaone. These lands adjoin the Pikopiko, and are near the probable main road to Taupo, and have all passed through the Land Court, with the exception of the 900 acre block; but this, in all probability, will pass this sitting. The whole will comprise a block of 6,462 acres, more or less.

The Natives ask 10s. an acre for the land at Pikopiko, but its value, I should say, would not be more than 2s. 6d. or 3s. an acre. The value of the other lands might be worth about 4s. an acre.

I have &c.,

THOMAS McDONNELL.

The Under Secretary, Public Works, Wellington.

No. 14.

Lieut.-Colonel McDONNELL to the GENERAL GOVERNMENT AGENT, Auckland.

Auckland, 10th July, 1872.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report, for the information of the Government, that in accordance with instructions I received from Mr. Clarke, the Civil Commissioner, I proceeded from Auckland to the Waimate, and from thence to Otawa, to make enquiries respecting the block of land named Waoku, offered for sale to the Government by Hora Puatata, Wiremu Pore, and other Chiefs.

I arrived at Otawa on the 25th June, a settlement on the Tahike, a branch of the Hokianga river. I held a meeting with the Natives, and the following morning I left with five guides, who were to show me over the country. About two miles from the settlement we entered the bush, travelled all day in the rain, and camped at nightfall, wet, tired, and hungry. The weather was of the worst description, and had it not been that we were fortunate enough to meet with and kill a wild cow, the fat of which I made the Natives burn for a fire, as there was no wood near that we could get to kindle, I doubt if we could have moved the next day from camp and the exposure, as we had neither blankets or other covering, excepting what we stood in. We passed a miserable night. In the morning the Natives had decided to return. It would have been useless to proceed, if even I had been able, so we returned to the village, which we reached late on the evening of the following day. I again conversed