

Taking into consideration the excellent quality of a portion of this land, its short distance from the town of Wanganui (twenty-five to thirty miles), and that it will be available for purposes of settlement, I think 4s. an acre a fair price to offer for it. The Native owners are, of course, asking much more, 15s. or 16s., but they will, I have little doubt, accept the price offered. I cannot conscientiously recommend Government to pay more than 4s., for the reasons already stated, viz., the broken character of a portion of the block and expenses of road up Mangawhero.

I attended a meeting on Saturday, 28th, and told the Natives what Kemp and self, with the sanction of Government, were prepared to give. They, in reply, said that the very lowest price they would take was 7s. 6d. By the time the land has passed through the Court, they will take the 4s.

I may state, in conclusion, that this is only the first portion of a very large block of land lying between here and Murimotu, which will shortly be in the market. But the Natives will be guided as to the sale of the larger portion by the price they obtain for the block now under negotiation.

Please inform me by telegram whether Government approve of the price proposed.

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH.

The Under Secretary, Public Works Office,
Wellington.

No. 38.

Mr. JAMES BOOTH to the UNDER SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 9th January, 1873.

I have the honor to report that Major Kemp and myself have this day negotiated the purchase of a block of land containing 3,600 acres, known as Pikopiko, and situated about twelve miles from the town of Wanganui; also of an adjoining block of 310 acres called Moetahanga.

Subject to the approval of the Government, we have agreed to give £800 for the two blocks, which is at the rate of 8s. an acre for Moetahanga, and a fraction over 3s. 9d. an acre for Pikopiko; 3s. 9d. for the latter, and 8s. for the former, come to £799.

The owners were offered 12s. an acre for Moetahanga yesterday, and they have, they say, been offered 5s. an acre for Pikopiko, but they prefer selling to Government, as they will have the advantage of a ready money payment. I have been to see the land, and find there is a road laid off up a valley called Makirikiri, and now being made by the local Road Board which taps it. There are also other roads running into it from Upokongaro. This land will be useful for purposes of settlement. The large block is generally covered with bush and manuka scrub, the latter excellent for firewood, and not more than five or six miles by road to Kennedy's, at which place is a firewood depôt, a small steamer carrying it thence into town. The two blocks in question have passed through the Native Land Court, and the Crown grants are now lying in Wellington. There is an adjoining block of about 1,000 acres (also passed through Court), which I think we can secure for 4s. an acre. I will endeavor to send tracings, together with names of owners contained in Crown grant, by next mail.

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH.

The Under Secretary, Public Works Department,
Wellington.

No. 39.

Telegram from Mr. JAMES BOOTH to the UNDER SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

Wanganui, January 13, 1873.

Hon. Mr. Mc'Lean has approved of price offered for Heao and Ngapuke Whakapu, as also for Pikopiko and Moetahanga, reported January 9th.

JAMES BOOTH.

The Under Secretary, Public Works,
Wellington.

No. 40.

HIS HONOR the SUPERINTENDENT of WELLINGTON to the HON. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

29th January, 1873.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, covering copies of letters received from Mr. Booth with respect to offers of sale of land, and requesting to be informed, in accordance with the 34th clause of the Public Works and Immigration Act, whether I would desire to acquire the lands referred to for the Province. In reply, I desire to state that I consider the acquisition of the lands referred to by Mr. Booth would be most desirable for the interest of the Province.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT,
Superintendent.

The Hon. D. Mc'Lean,
Wanganui.