

claim which I had equitably acquired, in favour of the Government, but would assist the Government agents in their negotiations with the Natives.

To this promise I have, at considerable loss to myself, faithfully adhered, and with a desire to further the interests of the Government I suggested to the Ngatimanawa to call a meeting. This was done in May last, to which Messrs. Wilson, Davis and Mitchell, and Young, were invited. I myself wrote and telegraphed to Messrs. Davis and Mitchell, urging upon them to be present at the meeting, as such another opportunity for making satisfactory arrangements with Ngatimanawa about their lands might not again present itself.

On the 14th I went to Galatea, and found a considerable number of Natives present; Mr. Wilson was there, but Messrs Davis, Mitchell, and Young had not arrived.

Mr. Wilson, I was told, was negotiating for the lease or sale of land in the district; but I took no part whatever in the proceedings, nor had I any conversation with the Natives on the subject of land, for the sole reason that the persons I came to assist were not present.

On the 16th Mr. Young arrived at the Native Contingent Barracks, but owing to the illness of Mr. Davis, neither that gentleman nor Mr. Mitchell attended. The Natives were greatly disappointed at their non-arrival.

I sent a note to the barracks inviting Mr. Young to come up and see the Ngatimanawa.

Taking advantage of Mr. Young's presence, I told the Natives that I attended the meeting for the purpose of assisting Messrs. Davis and Mitchell in their land negotiations; that all my interest in their land was now Government property. I used the expression when speaking about Messrs. Davis, Mitchell, and Young—*kua kotahi matou*.

I emphatically deny that I had any conversation with Tikitiki (I know of no Native of this name), or any one else about Waikowhiwhi or any other block of land, except a small reserve which I induced the Ngatimanawa to make for school purposes.

This is not the first time that false rumours have been circulated about me by some person or persons to serve purposes of their own. I can only suppose that the article in the paper under remark was inspired by some parties as a cloak to their own injudicious bungling. I have my own suspicions in the matter.

However, I have thought it right to make the above statement, and would add, that if the Government are not satisfied with what I have stated, I beg most respectfully and earnestly to request that an inquiry may be held with as little delay as possible.

I have, &c.,

GILBERT MAIR, Capt. N.Z.M.,
District Officer, Bay of Plenty.

The Under Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 7.

EXTRACT from *Daily Southern Cross* of the 30th May, 1874.

THE Native land question is continually presenting itself in various forms; and at times the action of some officers connected with the Native Department seems to be, to put the matter with ethereal mildness, certainly injudicious. It is not necessary to say that frequently such action is misinterpreted, misrepresented, and exaggerated, either by private jealousy, by disappointment, or by both. Hence, much respecting such officers and their dealings, of which common report may speak, or which may find its way into the newspapers, should be received with a certain amount of caution. But complaints are so rife and so varied, and proceeding from so many quarters, all in connection with meddling and muddling in Native land affairs, that we are disposed to think there is something in them, even after allowing an ample margin for what Disraeli termed "plundering or blundering," and to which latter, officials are sometimes prone. We are informed that many excellent blocks of land, comprising Native reserves in various parts of this province, and also in the neighbouring Province of Hawke's Bay, have been quietly leased for a long period, and on easy terms, sometimes to Government officers and sometimes to their friends. Leaving, however, generalities like these, and coming to what we are credibly informed are facts, we find that there is some conflict of opinion and of action between different Government officers in connection with the land-purchasing arrangements. There is so much looseness in the methods often followed, so little opportunity of the public tracing the action of land purchase agents, and, truth to tell, there are such frequent allegations of land speculation entering into and thwarting the true objects of the Purchase Department, that to arrive at the real state of affairs is often as difficult as it is to trace, through the labyrinth of officialdom, the causes and the laches which produce the blundering.

If what is reported to us as being done with respect to certain Native lands on the East Coast shall be found to be correct, there is sufficient evidence to show that the Land Purchase Department requires better looking after, and that officers paid by the Government require to be cautioned as to their course of action. There are certain lands in the Bay of Plenty and elsewhere on the East Coast which it is desirable the Government should obtain by purchase from the Natives. To secure these lands Messrs. Davis and Mitchell have been appointed on behalf of the Government to carry on and complete the necessary negotiations. In December last Captain Mair, under certain arrangements between himself and the Native Minister, under which we believe he was bound to act only on behalf of the Government, was appointed District Officer, under the new Native Lands Act, for the Bay of Plenty. Among Native lands which are in course of negotiation is a block in the Bay of Plenty district belonging to the Natives, which Messrs Davis and Mitchell were commissioned to secure for the Government. It is said that Captain Mair was cognizant of the fact that these two purchasers had been instructed to obtain this block, as indeed they were in treaty for it, and, as we are instructed, had