

1875.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE MURIMOTU BLOCK.

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER, to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington.

SIR,—

Wellington, October 16th, 1873.

With reference to a conversation held with your Honor on the subject of the acquisition of lands on the West Coast, and of the desire expressed by you that, subject to the supervision of the General Government, you should be authorized to acquire the district situated between the Manawatu River on the north, and the Waikanae on the south, and extending inland to the watershed of the Tararua Ranges, as well as a block of 62,000 acres in the Seventy Mile Bush, I have the honour to inform you that it is the wish of the Government to afford you every facility in obtaining the land as a Provincial estate, and that you will, as heretofore, meet with the utmost co-operation.

It must be, however, distinctly understood that the agents employed by your Honor are to be only those approved by the Government, and that I am to be kept acquainted to the fullest extent with the progress of their negotiations. It must be obvious to you that no satisfactory result could be achieved in the acquisition of territory if there exists any even apparent competition between the Government and the Province; and, while I am charged with the responsibility attendant on transactions for the purchase of land, I can only relinquish to others the duty of entering upon negotiations upon the clear understanding that I am to be fully informed of the precise nature of all these, and of the obligations which they entail.

Assuming the West Coast Block to contain 200,000 acres, and that the price, including the advances already made, will amount to £30,000, the sums necessary for completing the purchase can be furnished when required; but I would draw your attention to the necessity of discontinuing the system of making advances to Natives who frequent Wellington for the purpose of obtaining money on lands to which their title is, in many cases, of the most slender character. I consider that the best mode of acquiring a large extent of territory such as that now in question is, first, by having the title clearly ascertained in the Native Land Court, and then by fixing a time to assemble together all the interested tribes, who should execute a general Deed of Cession, and should thereupon receive, in the most public manner, the whole, or nearly the whole, of the purchase money.

It is, of course, my duty to see, and in this I know your Honor will co-operate with the Government, that Native sellers have ample reserves made for their use and subsistence, and that every care be taken to conduct the negotiations so as to leave no opening for future discontent.

It is necessary that a clear understanding should exist as to the districts in regard of which special arrangements are to be carried on, such as you have proposed to enter into, and I have to inform you that, with the exception of the two blocks of land mentioned above, viz., West Coast Block and the Sixty-two Thousand Acre Block, I consider it would be inexpedient for the Superintendent of the Province to enter into negotiations for land in other portions of it, as initiatory steps have already been taken by the General Government to secure for colonization as large an extent of territory within the Province as is found attainable.

Touching the general discipline of the Service, I wish it to be distinctly laid down as a rule that no officers of the General Government allowed to assist your Honor in the purchase of land be permitted to receive, without special sanction, any sums of money beyond their usual salaries; the introduction of a system sanctioning such a proceeding would only tend to create discontent among other officers of the Department.

His Honor the Superintendent of Wellington.

I have, &c.,

DONALD McLEAN.

No. 2.

Memorandum for the Hon. Dr. POLLEN by the Hon. NATIVE MINISTER.

WHILST in Auckland I met Messrs. Morrin, Tothill, and Jas. Russell, to whom I explained the arrangement entered into with Mr. Moorhouse in Wellington, when he was, on behalf of the Murimotu Company, treating with the General and Provincial Governments. With the arrangements