

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

these gentlemen appeared to be perfectly satisfied. It will, however, be necessary, in the event of their displaying undue haste in putting cattle or sheep on Murimotu, to restrain them from doing so until all the Native owners are agreed on the subject.

DONALD McLEAN.

S.S. "Rangatira," 9th April, 1874.

No. 3.

Mr. MOORHOUSE, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 25th March, 1874.

Referring to the several conferences between yourself, His Honor the Superintendent of Wellington, and myself, as agent for Messrs. Morrin, John Studholme, and others, I have the honor to forward for your approval the underwritten memorandum of the agreement arrived at between us:

1. I have undertaken, on the part of my clients, forthwith to surrender to the General Government most completely all claim whatsoever, in law or equity, to certain Native lands mentioned in the schedule hereto and shown on the plan annexed.
2. From and after this date none of the parties (my clients) interested in the Native lands, the subject of this memorandum, shall (except upon the request of the General or Provincial Governments), directly or indirectly, attempt the purchasing or leasing of lands from the Natives in any portion of the Northern Island.
3. That the best efforts of my clients shall be at all times at the service of the General and Provincial Governments in aid of the acquisition for public uses of the lands, the subject of this memorandum.
4. That for and in exchange for the considerations mentioned in the three previous paragraphs, the General and Provincial Governments, as now represented by the Hon. the Native Minister, and his Honor the Superintendent, have promised and agreed.
5. That whenever the Native title to the said lands shall have been extinguished, immediately thereafter the Superintendent of Wellington shall select about twenty-five (25) per cent. of the lands, the subject of this memorandum, for settlement. Blocks selected not to exceed four.
6. That the remaining seventy-five (75) per cent. of such lands shall remain in the occupation of my clients as practical tenants for the term of fourteen years from the extinction of the Native title, subject to the rental now reserved by the Wellington Land Regulations.
7. That in the event of the General Government only acquiring from the Natives a leasehold tenure of the said lands, then my clients shall hold the said lands as pastoral tenants, at the rate of rental and under conditions reserved by the now existing Provincial Land Regulations. Provided always that the rental paid by my clients shall not involve a loss (annual) to Government on account of rents possibly payable to Natives.
8. That whenever the Provincial Government may require for purposes of settlement the whole or any portion of the said lands, the same shall be vacated by my clients on reasonable notice, compensation being paid for the surrender on an equitable scale.
9. That as doubts exist as to the power of effectuating this agreement under the existing Land Regulations, it is agreed that the General and Provincial Governments shall take action to secure such measures of legislation as may be necessary for giving effect to this agreement.
10. That the actual money payments by my clients (acknowledged by the Natives concerned as being payment to them on account of lands to be acquired from them) shall, upon proof to the satisfaction of the Hon. the Native Minister and the Superintendent, be refunded to my clients by Government.

The above memorandum I believe fairly embodies the exact arrangement I had the honor of verbally concluding with yourself and His Honor the Superintendent of Wellington.

May I request that, if correct, you will favour me by, conjointly with His Honor the Superintendent, endorsing your approval.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. S. MOORHOUSE.

Approved.

For the Hon. the Native Minister,
DANIEL POLLEN, 25th March, 1874.

Concurred in by me.

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT,
Superintendent, 26th March, 1874.

No. 4.

Mr. MOORHOUSE to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 13th May, 1874.

I have the honour, as agent for Messrs. James Russell and Joseph Howard, of Auckland, to forward, pursuant to arrangement, particulars of their request in the matter of the Native leasehold runs they hold in the neighbourhood of the Murimotu and inland Patea Country, now held by the Messrs. Thomas Morrin and others.

Being cordially desirous of assisting the endeavour of the General Government and the Provincial Government of Wellington in the acquisition of lands in the North Island, they are willing, indeed very

desirous, to accept the same arrangement as was made with Messrs. Morrin and others, and evidenced by a document dated 24th March, and (copy) appended hereto. (*Vide* No. 3).

The case of my clients is exactly analogous to that of Messrs. Morrin and others, and I am fully empowered to bind my clients to the full performance of all the conditions entered into with the General and Provincial Governments by Messrs. Morrin and others.

The lands, the subject of this communication, are two blocks of open country, containing respectively 40,000 and 15,000 acres, and are delineated on the sketch map attached, and coloured red, and marked "Russell and Howard."

As Government is already assured of the *bonâ fides* of my clients, I need not say a word on that score, but simply express a hope that considerations of public policy will, as in the case of Messrs. Morrin and others, induce an acceptance of this offer.

The Hon. the Native Minister:

I have, &c.,
W. S. MOORHOUSE.

No. 5.

The Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER to Mr. MOORHOUSE.

Native Office (Land Purchase Branch),

Wellington, 11th September, 1874.

SIR,—

With reference to your letter of the 13th of May, in which you state that, with regard to the Native leasehold runs held by your clients, Messrs. Russell and Howard, in the Murimotu and inland Patea Country, they are desirous to accept the same arrangement as was made with Messrs. Morrin and others, I have the honour to inform you that the Government are prepared to grant to your clients similar terms, a copy of which is annexed.

The lands in question are those mentioned in your letter, viz., two blocks of open country, containing respectively 40,000 and 15,000 acres, delineated on a sketch map forwarded by you, coloured red, and marked "Russell and Howard."

W. S. Moorhouse, Esq., Wellington.

I have, &c.,
DONALD McLEAN.

No. 6.

NOTES of a MEETING held at the GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS on the 2nd September, 1874,
re MURIMOTU.

Present: The Hon. Sir D. McLean, Major Kemp (as representing the Wanganui claimants to the Murimotu Country), Winiata te Puhaki, Nehanera Te Kahu, Aropeta Haeretuterangi, &c., &c., Mr. Moorhouse, representing Messrs. Morrin and Co., Messrs. Howard and Russell, and the Native claimants to Murimotu.

Maps showing the position and estimated acreage of the land in question having been laid on the table.

Major Kemp said: The land known as Murimotu, as shown on the maps lying on the table, belongs to us, the Wanganui Natives. One block of 46,000 acres has been surveyed and passed through the Native Land Court. There is a block at Ruanui, containing by estimation 40,000 acres; also a block adjoining the Patea country, estimated to contain 100,000 acres, in which Topia Turoa has an interest; there is also another block containing 15,000 acres. This land belongs to us, the Wanganui Natives. For many years it was left undisturbed. At length Europeans went and saw the land. They desired to purchase or lease it. After many discussions we agreed to lease the blocks shewn on the map to Mr. Russell and others. We had merely a verbal agreement. We did not sign any deed of lease. After this, and before any deed had been signed, Mr. Booth came to Wanganui; he came from the Government. He told us that our leases must be made in accordance with the law. To this, after some discussion we agreed. In the meantime, Mr. Russell and the other gentlemen, on the strength of our agreement to lease, had stocked the land in question with cattle and sheep. I said let the stock remain on the land until a lease can be made through the Government. We now ask you to allow us to lease these blocks of land to Mr. Russell and the other gentlemen.

Hon. Sir Donald McLean: You can lease the land to Government, who will again lease a portion of it to the gentlemen you mention.

Major Kemp: Has this arrangement got the sanction of Mr. Russell and others?

Mr. Moorhouse: Yes.

Major Kemp: The rent we ask is sixpence per acre yearly rental, the term 21 years, and the rent to be raised at the end of each period of five years.

Sir Donald McLean: I will give as a yearly rental the sum of £10 for every 1,000 acres for the whole term of 21 years.

Major Kemp: We want an increase of rent at the end of each period of five years.

Sir Donald McLean: I will agree to this then: I will give £10 for 1,000 acres for 14 years, and £11 per 1,000 acres for the remaining seven years of the term.

Major Kemp: We agree to your terms; but we wish to make reserves for our own use out of the block, for a township or for other purposes.

Sir Donald McLean: I agree to your making reserves.

Winiata te Puhaki: A distinct arrangement was made by myself and others with reference to the block marked on the map to contain 40,000 acres. The price offered by Mr. E. Moorhouse and others and agreed to by us was £435 a year.

Mr. Moorhouse: stated on behalf of his clients that, as a special arrangement had been made with reference to the 40,000 acre block, if Government would agree to confirm the arrangement entered into

and pay the £435 a year, without respect to the acreage, his clients would be responsible to Government for the difference of the rate.

Nehanera Te Kahu said that he wished to have the whole of the land surveyed, and the titles individualised ; he did not wish to have any one interfere with his property.

It was agreed that surveyors should be sent without delay to survey the several blocks as shown on the map.

Te Aropeta said he was not prepared to accept the £10 per 1,000 acres rent over the block of 46,000 acres.

No additional offer was made.

Mr. Moorhouse suggested that the first year's rent, now overdue from his clients to the Natives, should now be paid by Government ; or, at any rate, that a sum of £500 be now paid to them on account of rent for past year, on receipt of which he would suggest that the Natives should sign an agreement to lease the land on the terms now agreed to.

JAMES BOOTH.

Wellington, 2nd September, 1874.

We, the undersigned, hereby agree to the correctness of the statements herein made,

NEHANERA TE KAHU,

WINIATA TE PUHAKI,

MEIHA KEEPA, and others.

Witness—W. S. MOORHOUSE.
