

PROOF COPY *

Mr. SUTTON.— * * * He has referred to a transaction with a Native whom he described as a man of intemperate habits, ~~whereas his remarks should have referred to the case of a gentleman who was attempting to get an interest in the block for speculative purposes only.~~ * * *

Hon. Mr. WHITAKER * * * It appears that he was ~~living with~~ the honorable member for Waipa in the Middle Island when the first transaction took place, and then the second transaction took place here in Wellington between the honorable member for the Thames and the honorable member for Waipa, and the result was a very large sale of land. I was in Auckland all the time. It was during the session of 1867, and I was in Auckland. ~~The company was formed here at Wellington, and I in my absence was put down as one of the company.~~ * * *

The honorable member for Dunedin (Mr. Stout) has made a very peculiar charge against the Government, and that is that they acted wrongly in employing certain Government officers in connection with the *Waka Maori*, and that when the action was brought against these officers the Government defended them. * * * It must be remembered that the Government were to some extent interested in this case, and I cannot see that they did wrong in employing a Government officer in the work of collecting information connected with the case. * * *

Mr. Cox.— * * * During the latter part of that session, the Hon. H. R. Russell came to me one day and asked me whether I had ever heard Sir George Grey express any opinion regarding the ~~farm~~ grazing country in the North Island. Mr. Russell said that he had only heard from Sir George that the grazing country was of good quality, but he had heard from others that the reverse was the case. My answer was that I had heard from Sir George Grey that the grazing country was good, but that I had not yet taken any action in regard to it. * * *

We told Sir George Grey that we were persuaded that the country in the North was good grazing country, and that we, with certain others, were prepared to constitute ourselves a company to purchase as much of the land as we could get. I say that at this first interview we entered very fully into all our affairs. * * *

My answer—I being deputed to do the talking—was, ~~There is no objection, as far as I am concerned, to what you propose.~~ By all accounts the country which we wish to acquire is undisputed territory, and therefore there can be no difficulty in getting 250,000 acres of it. * * *

An additional reason was that there were disturbances in connection with Te Kooti. That was in itself sufficient to prevent any gentlemen going and buying land in that part of the country. At that time wool was sufficiently low and cheap. These reasons, and the difficulty surrounding the whole matter, were sufficient to induce us, after the matter was gone properly into, to bring the whole thing to an end. * * * whole story in regard to these negotiations for buying a large block of land in the North Island. * * *

* Words struck out in proof shown by erased type.

HANSARD †

Mr. SUTTON.— * * * He has referred to a transaction with a Native, whom he described as a man of intemperate habits, *and, as usual, has attempted to fix an imputation on the purchasers instead of the gentleman who was attempting to get an interest in the block for speculative purposes only.* * * *

Hon. Mr. WHITAKER.— * * * It appears that he was *visiting* the honorable member for Waipa in the Middle Island, when the first *allusion* to the matter took place, and the subject *was renewed* in Wellington between the honorable member for the Thames and the honorable member for Waipa, and the result was *an arrangement for the acquisition of a very large tract of land.* I was in Auckland all the time. It was during the session of 1867, and I was *not here.* A company was formed here at Wellington, * * *

The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stout) has made a very peculiar charge against the Government, and that is that they acted wrongly in employing certain Government officers *to collect information in reference to the Waka Maori libel case,* and that when the action was brought against officers of the Government *they were defended by the Government.* * * *

It must be remembered that the Government were *virtually the defendants* in this case, and I cannot see that they did wrong in employing a Government officer in the work of collecting information connected with it. * * *

Mr. Cox.— * * * During the latter part of that session the Hon. H. R. Russell came to me one day and asked me whether I had ever heard Sir George Grey express any opinion regarding the *grazing* country in the North Island. Mr. Russell said that he had *not only* heard from Sir George Grey that the grazing country was of good quality, *but that all he had said about it was fully confirmed by the reports of others equally competent to judge.* My answer was that I had heard from Sir George Grey that the grazing country was good, but that I had not yet taken any action in regard to it, *and, in fact, had never seriously thought of the matter since.* * * *

We told Sir George Grey that *if we were persuaded that the country in the North was good grazing country, we, with certain others, were prepared to constitute ourselves a company to lease a big block for grazing purposes.* I say that at this first interview we entered very fully into all our *proposed plans.* * * *

My answer—I being deputed to do the talking—was, *Of course, we have no objection, Sir, to your joining us.* By all accounts the country which we wish to acquire is *a portion of a large territory,* and therefore there can be no difficulty in *adding 50,000 acres to 250,000 acres to meet the case of an additional partner.* * * *

An additional reason was that there were disturbances in connection with Te Kooti. That was in itself sufficient to prevent any *one leasing and stocking* land in that part of the country. At that time wool was low, *and the marketable value of sheep almost nil.* These reasons and the difficulty surrounding the whole matter were sufficient to induce us after the matter was gone *thoroughly* into to bring the whole thing to an end. * * * whole story in regard to the negotiations for *leasing* a large block of land in the North Island. * * *

† Words inserted and added shown by italics.