

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

SALE OF THE WAIROA BLOCK

(CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING THE).

Laid upon the Table of the House of Representatives by the Hon. Mr. Reid.

No. 1.

Mr. H. B SEALY to the UNDER SECRETARY for CROWN LANDS.

SIR,—

Crown Lands Office, Napier, 11th February, 1876.

I have the honor to forward a copy of a letter received by me from Mr. Percy Smith, of the General Government Survey Department, under whose directions the survey of the Wairoa Confiscated Block is being executed. You will observe that Mr. Smith considers that the survey of the unsold portion of the block into sections of about 300 acres each, as suggested by me in accordance with the amended regulations of the 17th March, 1875, would be an unnecessary expense, and he recommends that it should be offered for sale in lots of from 2,000 to 5,000 acres for the reasons given in his letter.

I have not been able to personally inspect the land on account of its distance from Napier, but I think it very probable that the block, however laid out, will fall into the hands of two or three, or possibly half a dozen, buyers, most of the military settlers' claims having been brought up by a few runholders.

If the Government concur in Mr. Smith's suggestions, it will be necessary to amend the seventh clause of the regulations of 17th March, 1875 (*Gazette*, page 201). (*Vide* Enclosure 2).

I have to request that I may be favoured with instructions on this subject.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary for Crown Lands,
Wellington.

H. B. SEALY,
Wairoa Confiscated Lands Commissioner.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

MR. PERCY SMITH to the COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS, Napier.

SIR,—

Survey Office, Wairoa, 8th January, 1876.

I have the honor to bring under your notice certain matters in connection with the Wairoa Confiscated Block now under survey, which I think the Government should be informed of before proceeding further in the matter. The instructions I received from you in relation to this block were, first, that certain selections made by military settlers were to be marked off on the ground, after which the surplus area was to be subdivided into 300-acre lots for sale.

It is with special reference to these lots that I now address you. From information obtained from the surveyor engaged upon the work, and from my own observations, I have ascertained that the character of that part of the block which it is proposed to cut up into small farms is of such an exceedingly broken nature that it will never be available for agricultural purposes; that the difficulty of giving access to each lot by roads available for wheeled vehicles will be such that the cost of construction of roads would exceed the value of the whole of the portion proposed to be so subdivided.

The only use that can be made of these back parts of the block will be as small sheep-runs of from 2,000 to 5,000 acres in extent. The soil is good generally, but covered with a rank growth of tutu, fern, and scrub, and appears capable of taking grass, but it is everywhere too precipitous to allow of the use of the plough. I am of opinion that the subdivision into farms of the proposed size—namely, 300 acres—is simply a waste of time and money, as I feel convinced that they would not meet any sale as such, but might be purchased *en masse* as a run, in which case of course the subdivision survey would be so much money thrown away.