

1880.
NEW ZEALAND.

LANDS IN THE PATETERE DISTRICT.

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE THERETO.)

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 3rd June, 1880.

“That copies of all correspondence and telegrams which have passed since the 1st day of October last between the Government or any of its officers, with Messrs. Sheehan and Whitaker, or either of them, or with any Judge or officer of the Native Land Court, or with any Land Board or member of a Land Board, or with any surveyor, relative to any lands, Native or Government, in the Patetere District, or in the neighbourhood or vicinity of that district, be laid before the House.”—(*Sir George Grey*.)

No. 1.

(Telegram.)

Auckland, 19th June, 1879.

HON. SIR G. GREY, Wellington.—Yesterday afternoon E. B. Walker, of Cambridge, whom you will remember meeting at Te Kopua, came down to see me from Waikato, accompanied by Mr. Whitaker. They had advised me of their coming, and I directed Mr. Grace to come along with them. Their business had relation to negotiations now going on for purchase of lands lying between east bank of the Waikato and the Tauranga watershed, and extending south as far as Te Atiamuri. Walker's object was to ascertain whether or not any arrangement could be come to whereby the competition now going on between himself and his friends on the one hand, and the Government on the other, could be avoided by us agreeing to allow them to acquire certain interests, and they withdrawing from others, for reasons which I shall explain further on. I deemed it advisable to meet them and discuss the question with them. The substance of their proposal to me is as follows: They ask us to allow them to complete negotiations for blocks of land containing about 40,000 acres, on which they have paid about £5,000. These blocks are adjacent to each other, and are all situate eastward of the Pokawhenua Stream, extending to Native settlements on the Patetere ranges known as Te Wetu. If that be done they propose to give up their interest in about fourteen other blocks, containing about 280,000 acres, lying between the Erukaiwhenua Stream and the east bank of the Waikato, running down to Te Atiamuri, including what is known as the Tokoroa Plains. They also propose to abandon their negotiations over the Horohoro Block, upon which they have paid £900. Several of the blocks which they propose to give back have been surveyed, and they have paid moneys upon them to the extent of about £1,000. They propose to abandon these moneys, and to hand over to the Government the survey-maps free of charge. They undertake to assist the Government in every way in completing negotiations for the blocks from which they propose to retire, and they agree to be guided by our officers in all matters connected with the negotiations of the blocks which they propose to retain. I should mention, also, that there is another block—through which the Rotorua main road to Tauranga passes—the survey of which I stopped the other day, for which Walker has been negotiating, and upon it he has paid a little more money. He proposes to hand this block over also. In considering this proposal the following matters require to be taken to account: 1st, Walker is a *bonâ fide* settler, and is expending a great deal of money in the permanent improvement of a large area of country in Waikato. 2nd, the fact of their competing has been, and will continue to be, a means of raising the price of the land which we are seeking to acquire, besides protracting the completion of our block indefinitely. As things exist at present one is almost powerless to prevent these causes of disturbance, and on that account it may be worth while to consider whether or not it would be desirable to come to such an arrangement as is now proposed. The question is one for Cabinet to decide. I will be glad if you could find time to talk the matter over with other Ministers now in Wellington some time through the day, so that I might be able to give Walker an answer before leaving Waikato on Saturday.—JOHN SHEEHAN.

No. 2.

(Telegram.)

Auckland, 19th June, 1879.

HON. SIR GEO. GREY, Wellington.—Confidential.—*Re* my telegram sent herewith respecting Walker's offer about Patetere lands, I wish you to understand that I have simply submitted the proposal made, with the means urged by the parties in favour of its being given effect to; at the same time desire to point out to you that the whole of the land to which they refer is covered by a Proclamation, and a great deal of it was included in Brissenden's negotiations of 1873, which were taken over by the Government of that day. Most of the payments made by Europeans concerned had been made since our Proclamation was issued, and are consequently illegal. In several instances the survey or the