

can leave Thames without inconvenience. Puckey is absent from Grahamstown at present. If he goes, he had better not interfere about Patetere, which is complicated enough, and may easily be made worse.—JOHN BRYCE.

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No. 72.

(Telegram.)

Tauranga, 3rd January, 1880.

G. T. WILKINSON, Esq., Land Purchase Office, Grahamstown.—If you think that by visiting the Patetere meeting on the 10th instant you can complete the Waiharakeke deeds, it is as well that you attend; but do not in any way mix yourself in the question the meeting is called for. The question of carrying on the survey and the purchase of the land is a matter you must not interfere with.—RICHARD JOHN GILL.

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No. 73.

Mr. J. SHEEHAN to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 9th January, 1880.

Referring to our conversation of yesterday, I have now the honor to address you in regard to the block of land known as Patetere. As you will, no doubt, have observed from the official records, lands comprised within the proclaimed boundaries were partly negotiated for by Mr. Brissenden, on behalf of himself and others, by way of lease. In consequence of the murder of Sullivan in 1873 the Government of the day interfered and stopped the negotiations, paying to Mr. Brissenden and his copartners a sum of money as compensation: in return for which these parties transferred to the Government all such rights and interests as they had acquired. These interests were, strictly speaking, worthless, inasmuch as the land had not been surveyed and put through the Court. But the Government were strong enough to prevent any active resumption of negotiations over the area for several years after the acquisition of those interests, such as they were. These facts apply only to a portion of the proclaimed block, as a considerable area of it is outside of Brissenden's boundary.

From 1873 down to 1877 scarcely any action seems to have been taken in the direction of acquiring these lands for the Crown. Hardly any moneys were advanced; and the tradition of the office appeared to be that it was not intended to carry out the purchase, but only to make use of the Government position in the matter to prevent negotiations by private persons, which might lead to a breach of the peace. The inaction of the Government, coupled with a quieter state of affairs in the King country, led to a great many private individuals negotiating for several distinct blocks within the boundaries. On coming into the office which you now hold, in 1877, I ascertained that nearly the whole of the country comprised in the Proclamation had been subdivided, and was in course of acquisition, either by lease or purchase, by a number of Europeans. On my first visit to Waikato, in the early part of 1878, to attend my first meeting with the King Natives, I was waited upon by a number of Europeans concerning these transactions, and asked to come to some arrangement whereby they might be allowed to complete the whole or portions of their purchases, the Government taking, if it thought proper, such proportion of the block as it might consider necessary in the public interest. I promised to make inquiry into the matter, and did so at the first meeting, which I have mentioned. In fact, the matter was brought before me by the Natives themselves under the following circumstances: Some of the surveys had then reached debatable ground, and armed resistance to their further progress was openly talked of. I made inquiry, and found the surveys complained of were being prosecuted without authority, and stopped them forthwith. The King people then asked me if I would prevent any further surveys of, or dealing with, the Patetere lands. I asked them to let me know whether they made the request as owners of the land; and the reply was, they did not make the request as owners, but that all the lands in question had been ceded to the Maori King to form a portion of his Royal territory; that the cession was first made when the first Maori King was living, and had been voluntarily confirmed upon the accession of the present Maori King. I then pointed out to them that the object of our meeting them was to do away with the existing condition of things, and to make provision for their return to their old condition as loyal subjects of the Queen; and, while I declined to admit the *mana* of the King as extending over any lands of which he himself was not the owner according to Maori custom, yet I would like to stop surveys and negotiations in respect of the lands referred to for a reasonable time, to enable our negotiations with the King party to be brought to a conclusion. Acting upon this promise, I took the necessary steps to prevent any further surveys, and also objected, on behalf of the Crown, from time to time, to any land being allowed to be put through the Court. The Europeans concerned complained very loudly about this, but were informed by me that the peace of the country was of much more importance than the acquisition by any one of them of some favourite piece of ground; that, while I was willing to deal fairly with them in regard to such interests as they might have acquired equitably, I would have to postpone the consideration of the matter until such time as I saw the outcome of the negotiations then pending with the King: and I also informed the Europeans that I would avoid, as far as possible, further complicating the question as between themselves and the Government, and would only advance further moneys in cases where, as a matter of public policy, it would be unwise to refuse such advances. You will see, upon reference to the accounts of this particular block, that only a very small amount has been paid since the beginning of 1878—the largest amount, a sum of £1,000, having been advanced by me at the last Native Land Court at Cambridge with the knowledge and approval of Rewi, who was present.

After the last meeting at Te Kopua the negotiations were finally broken off. I informed several of their leading people that I did not consider myself further bound to restrict dealings with these lands; that the word of the Government had been fulfilled by preventing surveys and negotiations since the date of our first meeting in 1878; and, as it was now apparent that Tawhiao and his advisers had no intention of coming to reasonable terms, the Government would very probably allow matters to take their course. In subsequent interviews with Rewi he quite approved of my action in the matter, and said we were quite right in acting as we proposed to do, when these people refused to come to reasonable terms. He then (you may remember), with a number of his people, accompanied me to the