

value, at upset price of £5 per acre. Will Board approve in terms of section 49 of Act? Send Board's approval as soon as possible, so that advertisement throughout colony may issue in your name. Fix date of application for deferred-payment sections on 6th May; auction for deferred-payment applications duplicated on 21st May; auction of special-value land on 22nd May. All auction sales to be at Carlyle. Applications for deferred-payment land receivable at New Plymouth and at Carlyle.—H. J. H. ELIOTT."

971. That telegram did not answer your telegram about Native reserves?—No, it did not.

972. Did you take any other step?—I sent immediately the following further urgent telegram: "New Plymouth, 2nd April.—Urgent. Special meeting of Board called for 3 o'clock to-day. How about Native reserves? Shall I leave out from schedules all sections known to contain burial-grounds, &c., about 30 in all?—C. D. WHITCOMBE."

973. Did you get any answer to that?—Yes, the same day; and the following is an extract from the telegram: "Waimate Plains. Native reserves proposed in terms of Humphries's telegram *re* Major Brown; or, rather, the sections are to be withheld from sale. Board's approval merely required as to special value and proposed days of sale."

974. Then the Board did not know what the Native reserves were to be?—On receipt of this I saw Mr. Humphries, Chief Surveyor, who informed me what sections were affected by the burial-grounds, fishing-places, and cultivations. Then the Board met.

975. What took place there?—I will read the following from the minute-book: "2nd April: The Board met, by notification from the Chief Commissioner, at 3 p.m. Present: Chief Commissioner, Messrs. Kelly and Syme. The Chairman read two telegrams asking that he would convene a special meeting. Mr. Kelly moved, and Mr. Syme seconded, That all rural land in Blocks V., VI., VII., and VIII., Waimate Survey District, be declared rural land of special value owing to its superior quality for agricultural purposes.—Carried. Mr. Kelly moved, and Mr. Syme seconded, That all the undermentioned allotments of rural land in Blocks V., VI., VII., and VIII., being lands of special value, be offered for sale by auction, at the Courthouse, Carlyle, at 11 o'clock a.m., on 22nd May proximo, at the upset price of £5 per acre." There was also a resolution fixing the price of deferred-payment land at £7 10s. per acre.

976. Were these resolutions of the Board communicated to the Government?—They were, the same day, as follows:—

(Urgent.)

New Plymouth, 2nd April, 1879.

BOARD has passed following resolutions:—

1. That all the rural land in Blocks V., VI., VII., and VIII., Waimate Survey District, be declared land of special value, owing to its superior quality for agricultural purposes.

2. That the following allotments of rural land in Blocks V., VI., VII., and VIII., Waimate Survey District, being lands of special value, be offered for sale by public auction, at the Courthouse, Carlyle, at 11 a.m., on the 22nd May, at the upset price of £5 per acre.

3. That the following allotments of rural land in Blocks V., VI., VII., and VIII., Waimate Survey District, being land of special value, be open for application on deferred payments on May the 6th, 1879, at the Land Office, New Plymouth, and at the Local District Land Office, Carlyle, at the upset price of £7 10s. per acre; and that the allotments for which there shall be more than one application shall be submitted to auction on the 21st May, at 11 a.m., at the Courthouse, Carlyle.

The numbers are left blank to fill in at Wellington.

C. D. WHITCOMBE,

Commissioner, Crown Lands.

The Under-Secretary, Crown Lands, Wellington.

977. In that telegram, the Board say that the numbers of the sections are left to be filled in at Wellington. Was it the intention of the Board that the Government should decide the sections to which the resolutions were to apply?—In my telegram of 25th March, I had asked the Under-Secretary about the deferred-payment sections, and made certain recommendations. On the same day the Under-Secretary telegraphed that the deferred-payment proportion would be suggested hereafter, requesting the Board in the meantime to approve the preliminary advertisement fixing the date of sale. On the 28th March, I again telegraphed that it was urgently required that the intentions of the Government respecting cash and deferred-payment lands should be at once defined, as the Board must meet to price the land if the sale was to be held at the date fixed by the Ministers. Still no instructions were transmitted on the subject. The Government having stated their intention of sending particulars of deferred-payment and cash proportions for the guidance of the Board, and the Board having determined to leave the full responsibility of the sale to the Government, the resolutions of 2nd April, as telegraphed on that day, were passed, leaving the Government to specify the sections: the responsibility as to whether this course was legal or not, being left by the Board with the Government. Had the Board arranged the preliminaries of the sale, at least half the area would have been offered on deferred payment.

978. Did the Board take any further step between the passing of their resolutions of 2nd April and the time that the land was withdrawn from sale?—No; two days after they were passed, the land was withdrawn from sale.

979. Were the Board consulted about its being withdrawn from sale?—No, they were not consulted. On the 4th April I received the following telegram: "Withhold advertisement *re* sale Waimate Plains until further notice.—H. J. H. ELIOTT."

980. Did the Board take any step, in accordance with that request, to withdraw the advertisement from the papers?—I withdrew the advertisement at once.

981. Was anything done after that?—On the 24th April I received the following telegram: "Proposed to issue following advertisement by direction of Minister. 'Crown Lands Office, New Plymouth, 24th April, 1879.—Referring to advertisement dated 25th March last, the sale of the Waimate Plains is postponed until further notice.—C. D. WHITCOMBE, Commissioner Crown Lands.'—H. J. H. ELIOTT." On the same day I received the following telegram: "Please inform me if you agree to advertisement withdrawing Waimate Plains, and insert it in Taranaki papers.—H. J. H. ELIOTT."