

No. 55.

Department of Lands, Wellington, 10th August, 1907.

Re Mokau-Mohakatino Block.

SIR,—

With regard to your inquiry as to whether the Government would take steps to acquire the land in the Mokau district known as "Joshua Jones's block," I submitted the matter to the Crown Law Officers to advise what the legal position of the Crown would be if it secured the leases at the auction—whether any payments made on account of the leases would strengthen the Crown's position when negotiating for the freehold from the Native owners, and whether the purchases (if made) could be paid for out of the Land for Settlements Account. I am now advised that the leases in question cannot be acquired under the Land for Settlements Consolidation Act, 1900, as the land is Native land, and the fee-simple cannot be acquired under that Act; that if the Crown purchases the leases at the auction it becomes the lessee, and will hold the land for the unexpired residue of the terms of the leases, subject to payment of rent; that it is difficult to see how any payments made on account of the leases would strengthen the Crown's position when negotiating for the freehold; and that the purchase of the leases could not be paid for out of the Land for Settlements Account. It is also understood that the Natives have always remained in possession or occupation, and protest against the leases, and the Crown (by purchasing the leases) would be brought into conflict with the Natives. Under these circumstances I cannot see my way to recommend the Government to acquire the leases referred to.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT McNAB,
Minister of Lands.

W. T. Jennings, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington.

No. 56.

Wellington, 22nd August, 1907.

Re Leases of the Mokau-Mohakatino Blocks Nos. 1F, 1G, 1H, and 1J.

SIR,—

Referring to Mr. Jennings's interview with you as to the purchase by the Government of the above-mentioned leases, and in conformity with the request which you then made to him that I should make you a written proposal on the matter, I now beg to make you the following offer—viz., to sell you the whole of the lessee's interest in the leases of the above-mentioned blocks. Copies of these leases are enclosed for your information. Portions of 1F Block are subject to under-leases to Messrs. W. W. Jones, R. J. Eglinton, A. Kelly, Jacob Rothery, Luther Wylie, and Cadman and Berry. Copies of these under-leases are enclosed for your information. The price which I ask is £20,000, to be paid as follows—that is to say, £2,000 in cash, and the balance in New Zealand Government 4 per cent. inscribed stock, principal and interest payable in London. The total area of the property is, by recent Government surveys, approximately 54,205 acres, of which about 7,046 acres are covered by the above-mentioned under-leases. The total annual rent payable under the head-leases during the half of the term is £196, and during the remainder £392. The following are the rents payable by the sublessees:—

Tenants' Name.	Number of Sections.	Number of Acres.	Rent.	How payable.
Walter Jones	1 and 2	894	£ s. d. 3 14 6	First 28 years from 1/7/1898.
			7 9 0	Residue of term.
R. J. Eglinton	6	1,329	16 12 3	For 3 years from 1/7/1898.
			22 3 0	For 7 years from 1/7/1901.
			33 4 6	For 10 years from 1/7/1908.
			55 7 6	Residue of term.
Luther Wylie	8 and 9	1,425	17 16 3	Ditto.
			23 15 0	
			35 12 6	
			59 7 6	
Jacob Rothery	12	1,358	16 19 6	Ditto.
			22 12 8	
			33 19 0	
			56 11 8	
Andrew Kelly	13	1,790	22 7 6	Ditto.
			29 16 8	
			44 15 0	
			74 11 8	
Cadman and Berry ..	Parts 16 and 17	250	1 0 0	First 10 years and 68 days.
			2 0 0	Residue of term.
				Term, 38 years 68 days from 1st April, 1901.