

No. 63.

DEAR SIR,—

Frankley Road, New Plymouth, 3rd April, 1909.

In the hope that steps may be taken to acquire and open the Mokau-Mohakatino Block of land for settlement, I should feel obliged if you would let me know if any steps have been taken to find out the present owners and the position of same. I venture to make the inquiry in the absence of Mr. Jennings, the member for the district in which the land lies, because the opening of this block is of immediate importance to the colony, and especially to Taranaki.

Yours truly,
H. OKEY.

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, Premier, Wellington.

No. 64.

DEAR SIR,—

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 16th April, 1909.

I am in receipt of your letter of the 3rd April on the subject of the proposal to acquire and open the Mokau-Mohakatino Block of land for settlement. In reply I may say that the matter is being inquired into.

Yours faithfully,
J. G. WARD.

H. Okey, Esq., M.P., Frankley Road, New Plymouth.

Referred to Mr. Kensington.—J. G. W.—16/4/09.

No. 65.

Department of Lands, Wellington, 5th May, 1909.

SIR,—

Re *Mokau-Mohakatino Block*.

In further reply to your letter of the 3rd ultimo *re* the above block, the whole matter has been carefully looked into by the Law Officers of the Crown, and they advise the Government that, looking at the very confused state of the titles in question at the present time, they cannot recommend the Government to in any way complicate matters still further by purchasing any Native interests in the above block. The proposal to acquire the land for closer settlement will therefore have to remain in abeyance.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,
Minister of Lands.

H. Okey, Esq., New Plymouth.

No. 66.

MOKAU ESTATE.

In Cabinet.—28th January, 1910.

GOVERNMENT is agreeable to purchase if valuation by Government officer is considered satisfactory.

J. F. ANDREWS,
Secretary to Cabinet.

Refer to Under-Secretary of Lands to have the property valued and reported upon as to its suitability for settlement, and also a suggested price—that is, as to what price we could put it out at.

J. G. WARD.

28/1/10.

No. 67.

(Confidential.)

Department of Lands, Wellington, 29th January, 1910.

Re *Mokau-Mohakatino Block*.

AN arrangement has been made by the Government to practically put an end to the trouble existing over the Mokau-Mohakatino Block by taking over the whole of the Native portion, which is now covered by leases and other covenants. The Government will then be in a position to pay off the mortgagees, and the Hon. Minister for Native Affairs will obtain the consent of the Maoris interested in the sale of the fee-simple of the block to the Crown. The whole block will then be taken over by the Crown and dealt with as Crown land. I believe the block is offered by the mortgagees and others interested therein at £1 per acre. Various offers have been made by syndicates for the purchase at a price very much in excess of £1 per acre, owing no doubt to the probability of there being extensive mineral deposits of coal, &c., which enhances the value of the land beyond its actual value for settlement purposes. I have now been instructed by the Prime Minister to obtain a valuation of the block, and have it reported upon as to its suitability for cutting up for settlement purposes, either wholly for close settlement or portion for close settlement, and the balance for small grazing-runs; also to advise the Government as to whether, taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration, we could afford to give £1 per acre for the land, and at what price per acre a considerable portion of the block can be opened for settlement—that is, could we get £2 per acre and over for some of the land, though other portions of the block might only be worth 10s. per acre, and could be opened as small grazing-runs? We should there-