

MR. SEARANCKE TO CHIEF LAND PURCHASE COMMISSIONER.

Wellington, July\* 1860.

Sir,—

I have the honor to forward to you General Report on Land Purchasing operations in the District of the Wairarapa, also plan of the same, showing all the different Blocks bought: the Reserves made in the same for the Aborigines; the lands the purchase of which has not yet been completed; and the lands still in the hands of the Aboriginal owners.

The plan is compiled from the numerous distinct surveys made during the last seven years, and is still very deficient in many parts: this deficiency I propose to remedy by making a complete Trigonometrical survey of the whole country between Castle Point to the North, the Ranges on the West, and the Coast on the East and South, and by the completion of the surveys of Reserves in connection with the Trigonometrical survey.

The plan forwarded herewith can only be regarded as a Sketch Plan, though I believe correct in many parts.

I have, &amp;c.,

WILLIAM N. SEARANCKE,  
District Commissioner.Donald McLean, Esq.,  
Chief Commissioner,  
Auckland.

## Enclosure.

## GENERAL REPORT ON THE WAIRARAPA DISTRICT.

The Wairarapa District includes all the land laying between the Rimutaka and Tararua Ranges on the Westward, the Coast on the East and Southward and the Boundaries of the Block of land, known as the Castle Point Block on the Northward, and is very thinly occupied by a branch of the great Ngatikahungunu family, a tribe occupying the whole of the East Coast from Wairarapa Lake to the South, to Turanga to the North. This District, from its being an open country, was subjected to repeated predatory irruptions from the tribes resident in and about the neighbourhood of Wellington and the West Coast, who, driven from their own lands at Mōkau, Kawhia and Whaingaroa, had, headed by Te Rauparaha, migrated and settled here driving its former owners, the Muaopoko and Ngatikahungunu tribes before them; the former were almost extirpated, the latter retreated into Wairarapa, which they subsequently deserted, being completely broken-spirited by repeated attacks, retreating in a body to Nukutaurua, a settlement near Table Cape where they remained about twelve years, returning to Wairarapa barely two years previous to the first arrival of settlers in Wellington, at the invitation of Warepouri, and other Chiefs, who had been the cause of their migration. The fact of their being a broken tribe prepared them to welcome European settlers among them, and subsequently, fearful that the Government would remove them, consented to the alienation of their lands by sale to the Crown.

The sale of lands commenced in the year 1853, and was vigorously carried on both in that year and in 1854, the payments for most of these lands extending over a term of years, a system well adapted to enable the Maories to establish themselves comfortably and lay the foundation of future wealth and prosperity, had it been in the power of the Government to retain some control over the expenditure; this from Native jealousy and other causes was not done, and the result has been that the deferred system of payments for lands has had a directly opposite effect to what was intended (*i.e.*,) an incessant craving desire not only to sell the lands still in their hands but also to keep a constant agitation over the lands formerly sold in order to obtain from the Government renewed supplies of money for wasteful purposes which they appear to think they are entitled to. The leading Chiefs of Wairarapa have sold nearly the whole of their available land, they are now in a helpless state of debt and poverty, they lived on, or rather wasted in a thoughtless and prodigal display the capital derived from their lands, in place of laying it out to advantage and living on its interest. Flattered by Storekeepers and others with whom they wasted their money and who seemed to have listened with eager credulity to their description of their lands as boundless, they were able to obtain credit to an extent almost incredible considering that they had to overreach European sagacity. But a small proportion of these liabilities have been liquidated, and this state of debt and poverty has paved the way for discontent and jealousy against both the Government and the Europeans generally; has caused a much higher price to be demanded for the small pieces of land eagerly offered for sale, and also the claims on them to be boundless. They see the Europeans thriving in possession of lands which they now believe to have been foolishly sold at too low a price, and without disputing the actual sale of the land, unceasingly make renewed demands for payments, which demands having no other alternative, according to the terms (already fulfilled) of the deeds of sale, but to dispute and prove the fallacy of, has led, I am aware, to a very indifferent feeling on the part of the claimants to myself, and will be found to be prejudicial to any Officer of the Native Land Purchase Department acting in this District for some time, until at least time and non-success proves the fallacy of their claims.

In the blocks of land alienated, extensive reserves, much more than they occupy or make use of, have been made for the Natives, amounting altogether to about 20,224 acres, the right of run over