

No. 57.

THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER TO THE ASSISTANT NATIVE SECRETARY.

Port Napier,
July 19th, 1859.

SIR,—

Acknowledging receipt,
£10,000.

I have duly received your letter of the 13th instant, covering copy of a letter to His Honor the Superintendent at Hawke's Bay, and advising me that the Sub-Treasurer at this place has been instructed to advance on my requisition a sum of ten thousand pounds (£10,000) for land purchases in this Province.

T. H. Smith, Esq.,
Assistant Native Secretary,
Auckland.

I have, &c.,
DONALD McLEAN,
Chief Commissioner.

No. 58.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER TO ASSISTANT NATIVE SECRETARY.

Land Purchase Department,
Napier, September 3rd, 1859.

SIR,—

General Report.

In reference to my former letters upon the subject of the negotiations upon which I have been occupied, during my stay in the Province, I have now to request that you will inform his Excellency the Governor, that I have brought these purchases so far to a close, as to enable me to proceed to Wellington.

His Excellency is already aware that, owing to recent disturbances among the Natives, and to their growing desire to make over their lands to the Waikato Confederacy, for the purpose of securing them from alienation to the Government, there appeared at first but little probability of acquiring any considerable extent of land from them at present, and my exertions have been unremittingly directed to the object of surmounting, as far as possible, these obstacles. After protracted discussions, I succeeded to some extent in removing these difficulties, and found that there was one large block of land estimated to contain about one hundred and twenty thousand acres (and which was claimed by both parties in the late struggle), which could be acquired, but only by following the practice of dealing separately with each party. I was aware that this mode of purchasing would increase the cost of obtaining the land, but, looking to the great desirability of making a move in any direction, which would have the effect of counteracting the political movements among the Natives, I felt it my duty to proceed with the purchase, especially as experience has already shown us, at Taranaki and elsewhere, that, when once a Confederacy gains a hold upon the minds of the Natives, it takes years to remove the obstacle, and I felt that a mere question of money should not be allowed to stand in the way of so important an object, and I accordingly commenced by extinguishing the claims of Moananui and his party to a portion of the Block, containing about ninety-five thousand acres, for which I paid them a sum of three thousand seven hundred pounds, as reported in my letter of the 29th June last. They excepted from the Block of one hundred and twenty thousand acres, about twenty-five thousand acres, to which the claims of Te Hapuku and his people were undisputed, as also certain pieces contained within their boundary to which they admitted Te Hapuku's claim. The land thus excluded comprised some of the most valuable parts of the district, including some fine wooded and agricultural land, some of it in the actual occupation of settlers, and for which they were paying a heavy annual rental to the Natives.

In dealing with Te Hapuku and his Tribe, it was found necessary, in order to obtain an undisputed title to the whole Block, to pay them for a larger extent of land than that to which their right was admitted by Te Moananui's party, who contended that the claims of the former were, in a great measure, forfeited by their defeat during recent hostilities, a doctrine to which Te Hapuku would not consent, as he did not regard the defeat as in any way calculated to prejudice his previously acknowledged claims.

In addition to the difficulties arising from the differences between Hapuku and Moananui, as leaders of two large sections of these Tribes, I found that a considerable number of Hapuku's own people were disaffected towards him, and I had the additional trouble of dealing with them separately, instead of through him as their Chief.

All these circumstances combined to render this purchase one involving much greater difficulty, delay, and expense, than I had at first anticipated; I found that to extinguish the claims of this party in a satisfactory manner, would cost a sum of five thousand nine hundred and ten pounds. The total cost of this Block will then amount to about 1s. 8d. per acre, a sum not excessive when the value of the land, its desirability as a site for small farm settlements, its proximity to Napier, its being surrounded by lands already purchased, and the political objects gained, are taken into consideration. The reserves in this Block will amount to eleven hundred and fifty acres for Moananui's party, and from six hundred to seven hundred acres for Hapuku's party, to be principally secured on individual Chiefs by Crown grants, instead of being held by them as reserves in common. When these reserves are surveyed, this Block may be proclaimed without further delay, and it is expected that it will realise a very handsome return to the Government,