

I suppose the particularity of the descriptions of the boundaries of this piece of land was considered by the late Government as conclusive as to the amount of land authorized by the Act to be sold and conveyed.

If the policy of the Act itself is to be reconsidered, there are certainly some points about the transaction which shew that the Province of Auckland had altogether the best of the bargain in dealing with the Colony. The land was valued at £25,000—fair enough sum for 8 acres. But it seems to have been overlooked that the Province of Auckland had been paid, in 1861, for the Government House buildings (which were included in the late sale for £25,000) a sum of £11,650; leaving £13,350 to be paid by the Province for the 14 acres sold under the 1858 Act; or perhaps a somewhat larger sum, if the decrease in value of the building since 1861 be taken into account. I account for this only on the ground that these reserves and the Government House were looked upon as property of the Province of Auckland, and transactions affecting them as affecting mainly the people of Auckland. When the original agreement was entered into for the sale of this land, and when the Act authorizing it was passed, there existed no jealousy as to the relative amount of advantage to be derived from the transaction by the Province or by the Colony. Indeed, it scarcely seemed to be considered necessary to weigh with any degree of nicety the respective interests of the two parties in the matter, still less to look upon them as rival or antagonistic.

The remarks made above upon the non-payment of the purchase money of the Supreme Court site into the hands of Government, apply equally to the similar omission in this case.

I shall only add one more to these remarks, which is, that, in spite of the recent change of the Seat of Government, it does not appear to me that there is any impropriety in proceeding with the building of a Government House, as proposed, in the Domain. To say nothing of future possibilities of a return to the old site as head quarters of the Government, there is no reason why there should not be a Government House at Auckland, though the Seat of Government be at Wellington; just as there has been for many years a Government House maintained at Wellington, while the Seat of Government was at Auckland. The Governor, I presume, might very often reside in the Province though it were not head quarters, (certainly, whenever the Native question shall have been settled). I should like to see also a Government House at Dunedin. The effects might be beneficial.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DOMETT,

Secretary for Crown Lands.

For the Hon. the Attorney-General.

No. 8.

MEMORANDUM by the ATTORNEY-GENERAL for the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

February 17th, 1865.

I recommend that the Commissioners of Public Buildings in Auckland be instructed to take no steps in reference to the building of a Government House at Auckland, until further instructed by the Government. Also that they be requested to report as to the exact steps taken by them in reference to public buildings at Auckland.

In consequence of the departure of Messrs. Domett, Gisborne, Knight, and Daldy, from Auckland, and the resignation of Messrs. Martyn and Newman, I think the Commission should be reconstituted, or its functions terminated. Resignations not printed.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

HENRY SEWELL.

No. 9.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to SECRETARY OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS COMMISSION.

SIR,— Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 22nd February, 1865.

With reference to my letter No. 22, of the 16th ultimo, on the subject of the proposed erection of a new Government House at Auckland, the General Government request the Commissioners of Public Buildings there to take no steps in the matter of that building until they receive further instructions from the Government with respect to it.

The Government also request the Commissioners to be good enough to transmit a report, in continuation of their previous one, shewing exactly the steps which have been taken by them, in reference to public buildings at Auckland.

Mr. Weld desires me to request you to lay this letter at once before the Commissioners.

I have, &c.,

W. GISBORNE,

The Secretary to the Commissioners of Public Buildings.

Under Secretary.

No. 10.

The COMMISSIONERS FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS to the UNDER SECRETARY, Wellington.

Commissioners for Public Buildings Office,

SIR,— Auckland, March 6th, 1865.

With reference to your letter of the 22nd February ultimo, addressed to Mr. Kempthorne, conveying a request by the Colonial Secretary that no steps be taken in respect to the Government House until the receipt of further instructions from the Government, I am directed by the Public Buildings Commissioners to state for Mr. Weld's information that, in the execution of their commission, they have chosen the site for the building; fixed upon the design; expended about four hundred pounds in plans, surveys, and other preparatory work; and have entered into an engagement with Mr. Rumsey, the successful competitor of the best designs, for a year certain, at the rate of seven hundred pounds a-year to prepare the working drawings, superintend the building, and generally to act as architect—a liability binding on the Commissioners in any event.

Looking to the large number of emigrants now being suddenly brought into the Province, it appears to the Commissioners that many of them will be reduced to great distress in the course of the winter, unless work be found for them by the Government, or other employers of labor on a large scale.