

Proclamation,  
dated May 17,  
1865.

6. Whether this was true or not, it was clear that no differences ought to be allowed if possible to arise on such subjects between the Government and the Queen's subjects. But General Cameron in making the several charges against me contained in his Despatch of the 7th of July, has not mentioned to Her Majesty's Government that from a determination to prevent such difficulties taking place for the future, I, upon the 17th of May, 1865, issued a Proclamation revoking all commissions authorizing the purchase of lands on behalf of the Crown from the Aboriginal inhabitants of New Zealand, and proclaimed that the Native Land Purchase Department was from and after that date done away with and ceased to exist. Only those well acquainted with the Colonies can tell how great a constitutional change this was, and what prejudices, interests, and feelings had to be overcome before it could be brought about.

7. I had also advised the preparation of a measure for the establishment of Courts which could entertain, hear, and decide all disputed questions connected with Native lands. This is now the law of the Colony. In all these proceedings my Ministers were cordially advising, originating, aiding and assisting.

8. Thus every precaution in my power, or in that of my Ministers, or of the local Legislature, had been taken to prevent any difficulties with regard to land purchases taking place for the future.

9. General Cameron leads Lord de Grey to believe that he only casually received an account of the transactions connected with the purchase of the Waitotara block of land as he was riding near Whanganui a day or two after the engagement at Nukumarū (26th January, 1865); he further states that he had no means of ascertaining the truth or falsehood of the account he received, but that his informant was a very respectable settler, (name unknown, or at least kept back), who had been a long time in the country, and appeared well acquainted with the history of the transaction.

10. This account of the matter is inconsistent with General Cameron's letter to me of the 28th of January, in which he tells me: "Since I have been in this part of the world I have made inquiries about the purchase of the Waitotara Block, and have reason to believe that it was a more iniquitous job than that of the Waitara Block. I am not surprised that the Natives have opposed our road-making. The Government at home ought to be made acquainted with the true history of the business." Nor is it consistent with his letter to me of the 11th of January, 1865, from which it appeared that even prior to that date the officers of the Head Quarters Staff had been making inquiries into the subject, and had reported to the General: "One thing is very certain, and that is that the man who sold the block had no right to do so, and it is the old Waitara dodge for getting up a war, and the consequent military expenditure at Whanganui." Nor is it consistent with the fact that from the Head Quarters a letter was written by a distinguished officer on the 4th February, to go to England by the next mail after the General's letter to me of the 28th of January, which was published in England, and attacks me in the most shameful manner in reference to this Waitotara Block of land, using some remarkable words, also used in the General's letter to me.

Enclosure in Despatch No. 158.

11. Sir D. Cameron also complains that after the land was purchased by the Government it was then hurriedly sold, without the usual notice by advertisement, to a few speculators in Wellington at ten shillings (10s.) an acre, the sum realized being £13,000, the amount paid to the Natives being £2,500.

12. He knew quite well that if this was true I had nothing to do with it. I had no more control over the matter than he had. The land must have been sold according to law. If wrong had been suffered by any individual there were the courts of the country; there was also its Legislature. Conceive a General Officer riding out of London, and meeting a man on the road who complains that the Corporation of London have sold land lawfully, but, in his opinion, unfairly; that the General thereupon reports this to Lord Palmerston, who, not inquiring personally into the matter in a manner satisfactory to the General, is supposed to have neglected his duty, and is called upon to defend his conduct. Were it not from the mischief done to me from such publications in England as the one I send home a copy of, from the difficulties I am drawn into with Her Majesty's Government, and the trouble and annoyance I am compelled to undergo, the nature of the complaints made would be ludicrous.