

laid down before a certificate of title is issued—a rule which has never been broken, and which alone has preserved us from any overlaps, or regranting the same lands, although the old surveys on which they abut are in a state of extreme uncertainty and confusion.

In order to get these duties performed in other Provinces, you made arrangements with the Government of Wellington, and the Provincial Surveyor there was appointed my deputy. I have understood that some similar arrangement was made at Hawke's Bay, and I have trusted generally to the Provincial Surveyor at Napier for the comparison of maps with adjacent ones, or with his triangulations. An endeavour was also made last year to obtain the temporary assistance of the heads of the Provincial Survey Departments in the South Island in checking the surveys of the few Native claims adjudicated on there; this attempt was only partially successful, but the excellent state of the surveys generally in the Southern Provinces enabled me to collate the Native land claims with the published lithographs sufficiently to make the issue of the Crown Grants safe.

I have only within the last few days had an opportunity of inspecting the state of the surveys in Wellington and Hawke's Bay. I find that in the Province of Wellington the Native Land Court surveys have been compared with Provincial surveys with some care, and they seem to have been generally kept in fair order, notwithstanding a good deal of recalcitration of the past of some of the private surveyors; but the compilation of every survey on a general map, which I look upon as the essential condition of safety, and as necessary for the maintenance of the records in a state of efficiency, has not been uniformly acted on, and in some districts its want is beginning to be severely felt.

The triangulations have been conducted on thoroughly sound principles, and are works quite suited to become part of a Colonial system; it will, I hope, very early be practicable to extend them by way of Rangitikei and the Patea Valley, as well as by Hawke's Bay, across the Rimutaka Ranges, so as to connect at two points with the Taupo surveys, by which a very large step will have been made towards the establishment of an accurate basis for the geography of the Island.

Since these triangulations were certainly not instituted or extended in any particular direction to forward the operation of the Native Lands Act, but are absolutely necessary for the proper administration of the lands of the Province, it seems clear that the utmost claim for a contribution towards the expense of them which can be legitimately made against the General Government is a rateable proportion for any land included in them which belongs to Natives, or which may become subject to the action of the Native Lands Court. Since the area of the whole triangulations is 1,700,000 acres, and it does not include the Otaki District, where the most numerous Native land claims lie, the share fairly chargeable to the General Government must be but a small fraction of the whole cost, especially if the Native Reserves, which the Province was bound to survey at its own cost, are not allowed for; it would however be a pity to be parsimonious in the support of so excellent a work, and it might be proper, therefore, to allow the cost of triangulation over all Native lands, without exception.

I find that a claim has been made by the Province of Wellington, amounting to the very large sum of £1,913. This claim was not referred to me, nor was I aware of it having been made until my arrival here last week, and in the meanwhile a gentleman in Wellington was called in to audit the account, without regard, apparently, to the rules or requirements of the Inspector of Surveys' Department for which the services were rendered.

The referee recommends that £1,482 should be paid. Of this sum £752 is the amount agreed by the Hon. the Native Minister to be paid for services of the Wellington Survey Department in carrying out the Native Lands Act for the year 1868-9, and is therefore beyond question (except as regards the due performance of the collating and recording); but since that agreement was distinctly intended to cover all services of the year, I cannot conceive it justifiable to claim, in addition, a contribution towards the salary of the Chief Surveyor who was to perform them; and the other item of £200 for copying plans must, it seems to me, have been passed by the referee under a mistake of facts. It seems sufficient to ask for whom these copies were made? Certainly not for the General Government, since my Department possesses the originals. They are most elaborate facsimile copies on drawing paper, and may well have cost a considerable sum; but it is clear to me that they were made solely for the convenience of the Provincial Government, and they are certainly of no service whatever to the General Government, and were not made by its direction; and the compilation which was agreed to be made would really have been of service, while these copies are not.

The remaining sum of £850 19s. 8d., which is claimed for services prior to 1868, consists of three items, of which two being for surveys of old Native Reserves, which in any case the Provincial Government was bound to make, the referee seems to disallow, the remaining sum is again for these copies, for which the General Government cannot be liable in reason and justice. It appears clear to me that, in considering this claim by the Provincial Government of Wellington, there are but two principles on which the audit can be based: one is to consider the agreement contained in Mr. Richmond's letter of 21st February, 1868, as final and conclusive, and to allow its amount in full payment for the year ending on 1st March, 1869, on proof of the due execution of the services provided for in it; the other to consider the whole case on its merits, and to assess the value of the services rendered entirely independent of the agreement.

The whole number of claims adjudicated on in the Province of Wellington which have reached my office is 195, out of 1,418 in the Colony; of these 195 I believe one-half have not been included in any triangulation, and no compiled map of any of them has been furnished to or prepared for the General Government. These facts and figures show the excessive character of the claim of £1,482 for local services in checking these surveys; calculated at the same rate, the 1,056 claims dealt with in the Province of Auckland would have cost upwards of £10,000.

I have elsewhere stated that, in my opinion, the complete and invariable compilation of every survey on a general record map, prior to the issue of certificate of title, is essential, and that any payment to the Provincial Survey Department ought to be conditional on such a compilation, the property of the General Government being maintained, as was contemplated in the agreement referred to for the payment of £572 annually to the Province of Wellington.

In the Province of Hawke's Bay, the surveys for Native land claimants have in most cases been