

The lands between the Waingongoro and the Waitotara have been utilized in satisfying the claims of military settlers, the awards made to Natives by the Compensation Court, and to form special reserves for Natives, and reserves granted to them for services against the enemy.

After settling all these claims, there remain only some 40,000 acres available for sale, and even this portion is subject to claims made by friendly Natives, which must be disposed of before any extent can be thrown into the market. With a view to getting rid of the difficulties which surround the question, I propose that the awards and special reserves mentioned above should be properly defined, and, whenever possible, should be acquired by purchase from the grantees. Where this cannot be done, the title to each should be individualized, so as to enable the Native owners to dispose of their property by sale to persons desirous of purchase for settlement. After the effectual disposal of the obstacles arising from the Native part of the question, the course to be adopted with regard to the sale of these lands will be simple, and will consist of a system of periodical sales, or such other means as may be found to be the most conducive to the establishment of an agricultural community. The numerous streams descending from the interior and watering the district, the abundance of timber, and the fertility of the soil, render this part of the country eminently adapted for the support of a large and flourishing population.

Patea, 12th February, 1872.

DONALD MCLEAN.

WAIROA.

No. 23.

Mr. LOCKE to the Hon. J. D. ORMOND.

SIR,—

Napier, 19th August, 1872.

I have the honor to forward the following report of my late visit to the Wairoa District:—

Among the many matters requiring attention, the most pressing were the settlement of claims for back pay due to the Natives, and the adjustment of the question in reference to old confiscated lands I have reported separately on the question of back pay.

As regards the question of confiscation, by a deed of agreement made between the Government and the loyal Natives of the Wairoa district, at a meeting held at Wairoa in 1867, the Government took possession of a block of land lying between the Wairoa and Waiiau Rivers, and between the Mangapoiki and Kauhauroa Streams, on the left bank of the Wairoa River, excepting a block of five hundred and odd acres at Pakowhai, and twenty 50-acre sections between the Mangapoiki and Kauhauroa Streams on left bank of Wairoa River. The remainder of the block then brought under consideration, under the provisions of the East Coast Land Titles Investigation Act, lying between the Waiiau River and the Wairoa River and Ruakituri Stream, stretching inland to Waikaremoana Lake, was returned to Natives, with the promise that the Government would divide it into blocks, taking streams or other natural boundaries, and also decide on the persons to be inserted in grants for the same. This was done to save expense, the land being rough sheep country. The Natives subsequently withdrew their claim to the twenty 50-acre sections, on the payment of £800 as liquidation of all claims of loyal Natives to the land retained by Government. Through the unsettled state of the district and other causes, the promise of the Government to subdivide the land and decide on persons to appear in grants has not until now been carried out.

On the 3rd of this month I met the Natives, who mustered in great force at Wairoa, in reference to this question, having previously ridden over the country and visited Waikaremoana for the purpose of ascertaining the most suitable boundaries for the several blocks into which it was proposed to divide the land.

After a full explanation and careful consideration, the matter was satisfactorily settled, and the lands divided into four blocks, and the agreement to the arrangement made signed by the principal chiefs on the part of their people. By the present agreement, the Government retain, over and above what they formerly held, two other blocks of land—one of about 250 acres at Onepoto, on Waikaremoana Lake, at its outlet into Waikaretaheke, the site of present redoubt; and fifty acres on Waikaretaheke Stream, where the proposed road to the lake will cross that stream.

I enclose tracing of the district dealt with, showing Government reserves, and the deed of agreement, with names of persons to be inserted in grants attached thereto, by which you will perceive it has been dealt with in a similar way to the Mohaka Waikare Block.

There is one point I would beg to draw your attention to—viz., the back boundary of the Government land between Wairoa and Wairau. The boundary, as first shown on plan, by the Ahu-o-te-Atua, I have every reason to believe, is not correct; but that the correct boundary is by the red and yellow line, shown on tracing. I have asked Mr. Burton to send me a sketch showing more plainly the boundary intended. The only inconvenience from this error—excepting the loss of a few acres of very rough land—is, that one block of forty or fifty acres has been marked off for military settlers on the right bank of the Waikaretaheke Stream. Whether this block of land has been taken or not, or whether the Crown grant has been issued, I am not aware.

The settlement of this long outstanding question will be of great benefit to the Wairoa, as settlers will now be able to occupy the country as sheep runs, and all feeling of uncertainty existing in the Native mind removed.

I settled the question in reference to Mr. Sim's sheep at Mohaka, they having been returned to him; and I also settled the other various matters that required examination into in the district.

I have, &c.,
S. LOCKE.