

I have delayed bringing this matter before you till Mr. Marchant's return, as he will be able to give you any further information required, and I think will agree with me that some action should be taken upon it.

What I recommend is, that you should inform Mr. Carrington, through me, that his time being fully occupied as Engineer in charge of Public Works, the Government has decided to abolish the office of Chief Surveyor and to leave the surveys entirely under the control of Mr. Williams. At the same time, I think Mr. Williams should be formally appointed by letter and *Gazette* notice to the office of District Surveyor in charge of West Coast.

Although the change proposed does not necessarily imply increase of salary, yet I think Mr. Williams' salary ought to be increased from £300 to £350 a year, with the ordinary field allowance drawn by Mr. Heale's staff. I have discussed this question with Mr. Marchant, who agrees with me that Mr. Williams is a most efficient and zealous officer, and that it is false economy to make no difference between men who do all they can, and do it well, and men who do as little as possible, and that little badly.

I have, &c.

The Secretary for Crown Lands, Wellington.

ROBERT PHARAZYN,
Commissioner of Confiscated Lands.

No. 23.

Mr. R. PHARAZYN to the SECRETARY for CROWN LANDS.

(No. 102-72.)

SIR,—

Confiscated Lands Office, Wanganui, 2nd April, 1872.

As it appears from the instructions I lately received from the Minister for Public Works, to report upon the availability of the Railway Reserve for Immigration settlement, that the Government contemplate settling the confiscated lands upon some more scientific system than is possible under the "Regulations," I think it my duty to point out that, if any change is made, no time should be lost in making it. I gather from the Native Commissioner, Mr. Worgan, that the Hon. the Native Minister wishes to have all lands put into the market as soon as they are freed from Native claims. So far as regards the Whenuakura Block, this has been already effected, and my present instructions authorize me to have the whole of the block (some 8,000 acres), surveyed, and gazetted for sale as soon as possible. In my first report (No. 44-70, 6th June, 1870), and on various other occasions, I recommended that some mode of disposing of confiscated lands more likely than mere sale to insure actual occupation should be adopted. The Government and the Secretary for Crown Lands, Mr. Domett, were, however, so thoroughly opposed to my views that it was useless for me to take any further action. I have therefore confined myself to carrying out the Regulations, with such modification, tending to encourage settlement, as I have been permitted to make in particular cases.

Now, however, such important changes have taken place in the general policy of the country that the Government may be disposed to reconsider the question.

In my opinion, the system of selling lands on deferred payments might be adopted with great advantage. The legal and official machinery for enabling this to be done could be easily provided without additional expense being incurred, by adapting part of "The Wellington Special Settlements Act, 1871," to the circumstances of the case, and giving me suitable instructions.

As an additional reason why this matter should engage the attention of the Government, I may mention that the Provincial Government is bringing pressure to bear upon Ministers with the object of having the confiscated lands placed under Provincial control, ostensibly in order to settle them more rapidly than at present. This is a political question, the decision of which rests with the Government and the Legislature; but if it is deemed undesirable to make any change of this sort, then care should be taken to remove all ground for the complaint that the confiscated lands are dealt with in a manner opposed to the best interests of the country. My own opinion is that, looking at the subject as one of policy and of mere business, the present mode of carrying out the details of administration with regard to these lands may be made to work thoroughly well, and that any change in the direction indicated would be both mischievous and unpopular. At the same time, it is evident that the reasons which have lately induced the Provincial Government to alter its mode of disposing of the waste lands apply equally to confiscated lands, and that the experience of one Government cannot be ignored by another without injury to the public. At any rate, the question what is the best possible mode of populating what is left of the West Coast confiscated lands should be decided upon its merits, and not by the accidental circumstance that the Provincial Government has taken the first steps in advance.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary for Crown Lands, Wellington.

ROBERT PHARAZYN,
Commissioner of Confiscated Lands.

No. 24.

Mr. R. PHARAZYN to the SECRETARY for CROWN LANDS.

(No. 169-72.)

SIR,—

Confiscated Lands Office, Wanganui, 29th May, 1872.

As requested by you during the conversation we had relative to the administration of the West Coast confiscated lands and the utility of my office, I have the honor to report as follows:—

First, as to administration.—That must rest either in the hands of the General Government or of the two Provinces of Wellington and Taranaki. This is a question involving political exigencies into which I shall not enter, further than to express my opinion that the General Government might make as good use of these lands as the present Provincial Government of Wellington, and could hardly make a worse use of them any Taranaki Government is likely to do.