

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

LAND PURCHASE AND LEASE TRANSACTIONS

WITH THE NATIVES IN THE BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT,

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The Hon. D. McLEAN to Captain MAIR.

Napier, 29th November, 1873.

I AM given to understand that you are stocking land leased from the Natives, in defiance of opposition offered by Urewera to your doing so, and I must have an immediate explanation of such conduct, likely, from what I hear, to create serious difficulties.

Captain Gilbert Mair, Taupo.

DONALD McLEAN.

No. 2.

Captain MAIR to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Te Niho o te Kiore, 1st December, 1873.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of the 29th November, 1873, with reference to stocking land at Galatea, &c., and, in explanation, I beg to lay before you the following facts:—

Ever since 1865, the Ngatimanawa have been pressing my brother and me to lease their land at Galatea and Ahikereru. For many reasons we have refrained from so doing, though we have advanced them money and goods, during the last eight years, to the amount of about £150. Last year a deputation from Ngatimanawa came to see me at Tauranga, and urged me to lease their land; that if I did not do so they would give it to people at Napier. I consented, and they agreed to accept £200 a year for four years, for about 27,000 acres, *i.e.* that portion between Rangitaiki and the foot of the hills. I made arrangement about stock, which arrived on the ground a month ago. Since then Mr. Troutbeck, of Napier, has obtained a lease from these people of the same land, at a rental of £300 for the first and £400 for the next six years; and I believe his cattle are on the way up. He has obtained promissory notes from the Natives for all moneys advanced.

In leasing this land from the Natives, I have never taken advantage of my position as a Government officer, nor would I do anything that might cause a disturbance of any kind. Though I do not believe the Urewera have any claim to the said land, I have always been most careful not to create a breach between them and the Ngatimanawa. On the contrary, I have done all in my power to promote a good feeling between the tribes, and with this object in view I have incurred considerable expense in arranging for a friendly meeting to take place at Galatea during the ensuing summer.

I have never had any reason to suppose that the Urewera had offered, or intended to offer, any opposition to my stock being put on the land. If, however, such really is the case, the cattle can be removed at any time to this side of the river. When I saw Kereru at Ruatahuna last year, his people all expressed their satisfaction at hearing that I had rented Galatea.

It was only through my personal influence that the Ngatimanawa consented to sell a piece of land at Galatea to the Crown a short time since; and had I been informed that the Government intended to purchase or lease land there, I could, from my knowledge of the Natives, have rendered material assistance.

The Natives all look with distrust and suspicion upon the agents now employed in negotiating for lands on behalf of the Government.

I shall be glad to make any further explanation you may deem necessary, and to promote the wishes of the Government in every respect, so far as lies in my power.

I have, &c.,

GILBERT MAIR, Captain, N.Z.M.,

Commanding Native Contingent.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Tauranga.