

by you, while those of the hapus who participated in the money are satisfied, inasmuch as you have given Ngatikau-whata a large sum of money (?) while our application is refused.

Hearken! We will drive off the pakeha's sheep that are on that run.

PITIHIRA TE KURU and Others.

In forwarding that and two other letters Dr. Buller wrote the following letter, dated the 5th February, 1877 :—

SIR,—

Hunter Street, Wellington, 5th February, 1877.

At the request of Pitihira te Kuru and other claimants to the Himatangi Block, I beg to forward herewith for the information of the Government three letters, viz. :—

1. A letter from Pitihira te Kuru and twenty-five others declining to accept the offer of 6,000 acres in satisfaction of their claims, as conveyed in the Under-Secretary's letter (30th September, No. 419), and stating their grounds for such refusal.

2. A letter signed by all the claimants, appointing three of their number to act, on behalf of the whole in all future negotiations with the Government on this subject; and,

3. A letter from the same Natives applying for their share of the Rangitikei-Manawatu rents.

In regard to the first and second of these letters, I would ask, on behalf of my clients, to be allowed an interview with the Hon. the Native Minister for the purpose of explaining more fully than can be done by letter the history and present position of the Himatangi case.

With reference to the third letter, it may be necessary to explain that when the late Dr. Featherston commenced the negotiations which ended in the purchase for the Crown of the Rangitikei-Manawatu Block, he impounded the rents which were being paid by the squatters (under Native leases), promising to collect and pay these over on the completion of the purchase. The ostensible reason for this was that the tribes were disputing over these rents, and might come to blows about the division; the more obvious reason was that the stoppage of this income would accelerate the sale of the land.

When the purchase was completed, the back rents thus impounded had amounted to £3,000. After deducting therefrom the shares of those admitted owners (the Himatangi claimants being among the number) Dr. Featherston paid these rents over to the tribes at the same time that he handed over the purchase-money.

Although kept back for that purpose, it appears that this proportionate share has never yet been handed over to the Himatangi Natives.

Alexander Mackay, Esq.,

Native Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

W. L. BULLER.

I will also read another of the enclosures, No. 2.

(Translation.)

Himatangi, 20th January, 1877.

THIS is a letter of ours appointing certain persons to act on our behalf and to confer with the Government, and with our lawyer also, Dr. Buller, respecting our land Himatangi. There are three hapus who have agreed to this arrangement: for Ngatiteau, Pitihira te Kuru; for Ngatirakau, Renata Ropiha; for Ngatituranga, Rori Rangihewa.

RETIMANA TE KAMA, and Others,

Being the names of the persons who agree to these three persons to act on behalf of the three tribes of Ngatiteau, Ngatirakau, and Ngatituranga.

288. *Colonel Trimble.*] Who are the persons referred to in the letter as the persons authorized to negotiate with the Government?—For Ngatiteau, Pitihira te Kuru; for Ngatirakau, Renata Ropiha; for Ngatituranga, Rori Rangihewa. In accordance with that letter Dr. Buller appears to have had an interview with Dr. Pollen, and a conference on this subject. There are Ministerial memoranda which it would not be right for me to refer to. The Minister concerned (Dr. Pollen) has himself given evidence upon these negotiations. The conclusion arrived at by the Government was to give the whole of the Himatangi Block to the Natives, and to bring in a Bill for that purpose. That decision was conveyed to Dr. Buller in the following letter, dated 30th June, 1877 :—

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 30th June, 1877.

Referring to the correspondence that has taken place on the subject of the Himatangi Block, I have the honour to inform you that the Hon. Native Minister intends to submit to Parliament a Bill to authorize the giving-back of the block to the Natives, making it inalienable.

Dr. Buller, C.M.G., Solicitor, &c., Wellington.

I have, &c.,

HENRY T. CLARKE, Under-Secretary.

289. Is there any reply to that?—No, there is no written reply on record; but Dr. Buller was in frequent communication with the Government on the subject. I have before me the draft Bill for the Himatangi Block—the Himatangi Crown Grants Bill. The 17th section in the original draft of this Bill says that “the passing of this Act shall be deemed and taken to be a full and complete satisfaction of all actions, suits, claims, damages, and demands whatsoever, both at law and in equity, which the said hapus, or the members thereof, now have against Her Majesty or the colony in respect of, or arising out of, or concerning the said block, or the rents, issues, and profits thereof, or the sum of £500 paid to the Provincial Government of the late Province of Wellington, or of the interest thereon, or otherwise howsoever.” I do not know whether I am right in expressing an official conclusion.

*The Chairman.*] You need not do so now. Keep to the facts.

290. *Colonel Trimble.*] That is the Bill that was actually introduced?—This, I believe, is the Bill that was actually introduced. It has been necessary for me to refer to the giving-back of the land, for the land question and the rents are so intermixed that it would not have been possible to make one matter clear without referring to the other. The latter portion of the clause which I have read was struck out in the Legislative Council. After the Bill was passed correspondence commenced with regard to the back rents. Dr. Buller wrote to the office, dated 22nd November, 1877, as follows :—

Hunter Street, Wellington, 22nd November, 1877.

SIR,—

Re Himatangi.

Will you kindly inform me whether it is the intention of the Government to make provision on the supplementary estimates for the £1,000 now claimed by the Himatangi Natives in respect of back rent and interest thereon at 10 per cent.

You are doubtless aware that the Hon. Dr. Pollen, in his place in the Legislative Council, when introducing the Himatangi Crown Grants Bill, gave a pledge on behalf of the Government that this claim should be met and satisfied.

H. T. Clarke, Esq., Under-Secretary, &c.

I have, &c.,

W. L. BULLER.

I should here state, to make the matter clear, that this and other letters evidently go upon the assumption that there was at the time some money in the hands of the Provincial Government which remained unpaid in connection with this block. This letter does not appear to have been submitted to the Minister; but instructions were given by the Under-Secretary to ascertain whether the amount of impounded rents was in the hands of the Provincial Government. The