

so; in fact, they considered they had a perfect right to resume possession of the Pukeroa Hill Reserve, the agreement not having been carried out. I replied that, as they had alluded to a wish to take possession of Pukeroa, I thought it only right to tell them that they could not do so. I had not come to hear anything about the past agreements, and only got up to reply lest they should argue acquiescence on my part if I remained silent when they referred to reoccupying Pukeroa. There was a great deal of talk about the agreement with Judge Fenton, and the subsequent agreement with Judge Clarke. A great many of the owners consider they are entitled to more shares than they were allotted, and ask that Judge Clarke may be sent to Rotorua to alter the share-allotment. I told them I could do nothing to help them in this, as Judge Clarke's awards seemed to me final: I did not think they could be altered.

Nothing was done at this meeting on the question of selling, simply because no one liked to openly advocate such a course, although it was easy to see the majority present were inclined to do so. The young people did not like to declare for selling, out of respect to the old ones. The position is this: The Ngatiwhakaue are divided. Some have supported Mr. Taiwhanga, while others could not. Most of the old chiefs appear to have advocated Mr. Taiwhanga, but since Te Karihi's return they appear to be satisfied that he cannot do them any good, consequently they have thrown him over; but they want to get out of being laughed at by those who tried to dissuade them from allowing Mr. Taiwhanga to interfere in their business. This is the real position: hence nothing about selling was arranged at meeting. After the meeting, however, many Natives came to me and offered to sell, saying that if I was prepared to buy they were prepared to sell. Ngahuruhuru and Petera Pukuatua spoke in the same strain. The former said right out that he was a seller, and would sell then if I would purchase. Petera did not go as far as this, but told me to bring plenty of money with me on my next visit. I feel confident that at least thirty shareholders would have sold while I was there had I had the means to purchase. Hans Tapsell informed me that Petera had been to his tent to see him and informed him that the place would be sold. I understood from this that he would make no opposition.

I am of opinion that, if the freehold is required, the purchase should be taken in hand at once. I believe the two blocks named contain about 3,200 acres, and that the same could be acquired for about £6,400.

You will note the Natives said nothing about a price. I take it they did this purposely, hoping thereby to get perhaps more than they would if they had proposed a price, which might be taken as an indication on their parts as being anxious to sell. I should propose that no lump sum be mentioned to them, but, if the purchase is to be gone on with, that they receive a fixed sum per share. There are 1,100 shares and 307 shareholders on the list furnished me to make payments on. I think if the question of price is discussed the purchase will be more difficult. Many Natives came to me during the 9th, Friday, and expressed a wish to sell, suggesting that I should bring the money on my next visit, when I would see how it would go. The Ngatiwhakaue, who are proceeding to Whakatane to *uhunga* for Wepiha Apanui, would have all sold, I think, as they wanted the cash.

I am not in a position to say how many shareholders will sell, but certainly think that when a beginning is once made there will be a rush of sellers as soon as the first ten signatures are attached to the deed. There are a good many minors with trustees, and some whose trustees are dead. Other minors appear to me to be old enough to deal with their own interests, having passed the age of twenty-one. Taurira Pureu is another Native, a leading man, who came to me himself and said he would lead the way by signing the deed first. The question for your decision is whether the purchase shall be undertaken. I believe with Hans Tapsell's assistance the purchase can be carried out successfully. The Natives will be anxious to learn your decision, and I feel, if the freehold is desired, that the question should be decided at once, so as to take advantage of the Natives while in the humour to sell.

I have, &c.,

R. S. BUSH, Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

The UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department, to R. S. BUSH, Esq., R.M., Tauranga.

SIR,— Native Land Purchase Office, Wellington, 24th November, 1888:

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon. the Native Minister, to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, reporting on your interview with the Natives respecting the proposed sale of the Rotorua Township.

I have, &c.,

T. W. LEWIS, Under-Secretary.

R. S. Bush, Esq., Resident Magistrate, Tauranga.

R. S. BUSH, Esq., R.M., Tauranga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Tauranga, 19th November, 1888.

RETURNED from Rotorua Saturday evening. Feel sure could purchase interests of one hundred owners within first few days after beginning; believe all would sell, but the matter should be taken in hand at once. Leave for Opotiki Wednesday. Have Court at Maketu on 7th proximo, when could buy Maketu owners' shares. Make special trip to Rotorua to purchase those selling there. Costs small if my suggestion in wire of 10th adopted. If freehold desired, no delay should be allowed. Natives should be dealt with while in humour.

R. S. BUSH, Resident Magistrate.

Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.