

*Re Rangitoto No. 61 and its Subdivisions.*

I regret to say that I was unable to buy more in these blocks, the owners looking upon 10s. per acre as not the value; but, that being the extreme price I could go to, I could not offer more.

As to the other—larger—Rangitoto-Tuhua Blocks in which I have purchased, such as Otamati, Mapara, Tangitu, Whatitokarua, and some others, although somewhat rough, they will in time come in and carry a number of useful settlers.

When I started purchasing you instructed me not to purchase any of the Rangitoto-Tuhua Blocks in the vicinity of Potakataka Block, owing to disputes *re* survey of boundaries. Since then the question in dispute has been referred to the Native Land Court, and, I believe, finally settled. The owners now in all the blocks in that locality are most desirous to sell. The land is somewhat rough, but there is good timber on it, and it is not of bad quality, and will make good grazing-farms.

*Re Kinohaku East and West Blocks.*

As per schedule attached, you will see I have purchased in a good many blocks, but there are still a great number in which the Natives have not sold scattered amongst the holdings held by European settlers. The most of the above blocks are unoccupied by the Maoris, and are not being utilised by them. All, I am sure, could be acquired in the course of a short time; at present the owners are holding out for better prices, and do not seem to care about dealing with the land in any other way than by sale. They nearly all say that, the interest of each individual in each block being small (only a few acres), it is therefore useless to lease, for what they would get from the land in the shape of rent would be so small that it would be of no use in the way of maintaining them.

*Re Taumatotara Block and its Subdivisions.*

Of the above I have acquired only 2,362 acres, or thereabouts. This block, as you know, lies in the middle of a large district-settled by Europeans. It is situated, as you know, in the Kawhia South Survey District. As the land is in no way utilised by the Native owners, the acquisition of the same is most necessary, so as to advance the settlement of that part of the district. The owners show little disposition in the way of selling, nor do they seem to care about leasing. Any owners whom I have approached wish to sell, but the price they ask is far above the value put on the land by the Government Valuer.

*Re Moerangi Block.*

This large block, comprising 45,000 acres, and situated between Raglan and Kawhia, is still in such a state that it cannot be dealt with in any shape or form. It is now many months since the Natives who are supposed to own it started to try and get the title to the land decided upon, so as to open it up for the benefit of both themselves and Europeans. The only solution of the difficulty that I can see is that the land should be taken into the Native Land Court and dealt with in the usual way. The object has been to bring the land under the provisions of the late legislation affecting Maori lands—that is, a certain portion be set apart for a papakainga, another to be cut up as farms for themselves to work and cultivate, another for leasing purposes, and another to be sold to the Crown for settlement by Europeans. The idea, as set out above, the Natives seem to appreciate and quite agree with. But the trouble is the jealousy amongst different sections of owners as to how each should participate.

I have, &c.,

W. H. GRACE.

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