

"E."

[Copy.]

Rotorua, 21st March, 1878.

The Under Secretary, Native Department.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose herewith a tracing from the map of "Tauhara Middle lease" block, Taupo District for the purpose of showing you the various places therein, indicated by the Natives as necessary reserves for cultivation and residence.

These proposed reservations if agreed to would very materially depreciate the value of the lease to Government, absorbing as they do the bulk of the forests and the few localities within the block suitable for homesteads. The agents therefore informed the Natives that these proposals could not be entertained and meeting after meeting was held with the Grantees, and those outside the grant, with the object of arriving at some conclusion which would satisfy the majority of the Natives concerned, and yet better protect the interests of the public, but the only decision agreed to was that the proposed reserves should be roughly surveyed and sketched on a plan for reference to the Government.

Captain Turner was therefore asked to do this work when in that neighbourhood and I received the accompanying tracing showing same, from the survey office a few days since. Under the terms of the Deed of lease of this block the Government may decide absolutely what reserves are to be allowed, no stipulation having been made on the subject at the time of signing the deed. On the representation, however, of some of the grantees subsequently, it was agreed by the agents that sufficient provision be made within the block for Native cultivation and residence. But the present proposals appeared to us to go far beyond that and with the view—we had reason to believe, of leasing these choice reserves to private individuals at the expense of the original Government lease. A Sergeant of the Armed Constabulary named Straughan, stationed at Taupo now occupies "Motukino" and pays rent I understand, and "Motukino" is one of the places asked for as a reserve. A settler named Griffiths also rents a small portion of the Opepe Bush which is included in the area asked for there as residence and cultivation reserve, whereas the fact of the Natives leasing these places proved that the lands are not immediately required for native use. In the case of "Motukino" and "Opepe" it must be noted that these two places were occupied by Europeans (squatters) at the time of the Government Agents leasing the whole block to Government, but these original Europeans have left some time ago. "Pahautea" has not been occupied by Natives for generations and was only visited of late years during the bird season. "Waitahanui" contains a large swamp of no use for Native residence or cultivation and "Tauhara Mountain" while being a very desirable portion of the block for European occupation is only of value to the Natives for bush cultivations where a few acres only to each hapu have been used for many years past.

If I am permitted to make any suggestion I would recommend that the District Officer, Captain Mair be deputed to exercise the right which the Government hold of deciding the number and area of Reserves which may be deemed necessary for the Natives within the "Tauhora lease" as I believe, with his assistance, the question could be settled satisfactorily. This appears to be the only question now hindering the completion of the "Tauhora Middle lease." (Sgd.) HENRY W. MITCHELL.

"E 2."

[Copy.]

TELEGRAM.

1st March, 1879.

HENRY MITCHELL, Esq., Taupo.

No. 1342. Pending other instructions please close the Middle Tauhara Lease question using every means first to make it a purchase. Back rent will be paid on the understanding that the Reserves embrace only lands under *cultivation and occupation by Native owners*. The account for rent to be forwarded to Wellington for payment with report from yourself that Title to purchased portion of the Block as well as the lease is now complete. The deed of purchase is with you this should be returned with your report.

(Sgd.) RICHARD JOHN GILL.

26/3/1879.

RICH. J. GILL,

Re forests in Tauhora Middle Block lease will Government approve of a clause to following effect viz. that free access to forests be secured for all timber required for use within and on the block but not for sale such as the proviso re forests in Oruanui lease made by Auckland and possibly it might suit both natives and Government in this case also please reply to this question with the previous ones.

(Sgd.) HY. MITCHELL.

The HON. J. SHEEHAN, Wellington.

Re Taumara Middle Block the lease and purchase have been signed by all the living grantees and by the trustees appointed for the minors in the succession to the deceased grantees the trustees signed the deeds of conveyance and lease on the 30th August 1877 I have seen Poihipi and he is firmly in favour of completing the lease he and the grantees agreed to in 1873. He advocates giving no reserves at all except the summit of Tauhara Mountain, that of course will not satisfy the people who are living and cultivating on the block and who rather than not have considerable reserved would