

They are frequently more difficult to remove and often more likely to give rise to native disturbances.

5. Q—I observe the gentleman engaged in these purchases was Mr. Cooper. Was he likewise engaged in the purchases at Taranaki out of which the recent disturbances have arisen? A—He was.

6. Q—He states that he has agreed to pay £2000. Has he authority to make such an agreement? A—When I was down in Ahuriri in conjunction with the Commissioner of Crown Lands I made an estimate of the sums required to buy the Waste Lands still remaining unpurchased in that district. In making that estimate the Crown Commissioner and myself had fixed that it would be worth while to pay from 6d. to 1s, an acre for a great part of the land that was still unpurchased, and I believe that the estimates of these blocks do not exceed those estimates.

7. Q—Did you give Mr. Cooper authority to conclude the bargain? A—He was instructed to send up an account of the lowest price which the natives would take for the blocks, and to report to the Government. Upon receiving the sanction of the Government he was to conclude the arrangement. But in this instance he was induced by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr. Domett, to conclude certain purchases for fear that the natives might alter their intention.

8. Q—Then in pursuance of the Commissioner's instructions he has concluded this bargain? A—Yes, but from what I hear from the natives and the Commissioner it is subject to the ratification of the Governor.

9. Q—Does that contract relate to the 8,500 acres, part of which was in dispute. A—It does.

10. Q—Is the boundary of the disputed land well defined? A—It is easily ascertainable, a river being on one side. There is no dispute concerning the greater portion of it.

11. Q—From what you have heard of these disputes do you consider the difficulties which appear to exist in this case sufficient to justify you in not concluding the purchase? A—No, I should not consider it so, as by paying a portion of the money to the dissatisfied claimants, and by getting both parties together before finally concluding the arrangement, it would be more likely to put an end to the quarrel than to leave it an open question.

12. Q—Do the claims of the Moananui extend beyond those 8000 acres? A—No.

13. Q—Do any others possess claims on the same? A—I understand not.

14. Q—Is the disputed land superior to the remainder? A—No, it is average land.

15. Q—Judging from your experience of past transactions with the natives, do you not think that any payment made to one party of claimants over block No. 1 will tend to render it more difficult to come to an accommodation with the rival claimants. A—I have found many instances in which it has had a contrary effect. In one instance in the vicinity of Auckland where two tribes would not agree after several years' negotiation to sell their claims conjointly, they have recently agreed to sell separately. These are the Ngatitapa and Ngatiteata. The former were in the first instance paid for their interest, subsequently the latter. No difference now exists between those two tribes, and the land has been fairly acquired by the Government. This instance relates to the Waiuku.

By Mr. Forsaith :—

16. Q—Are you not aware that in one instance in this district when payment was made to one party of claimants before the matter was finally settled it led to disputes and bloodshed? A—I do not know the instance referred to, but I believe there may be difficulties from making such payments. So much depends on circumstances.

17. Q—I refer to the Pukekohi. Do you know any circumstances relating to that purchase which may account for the bloodshed which ensued from money being paid to one party of claimants before the others were satisfied? A—No, I do not know the particular circumstances referred to as having been occasioned by the payment of money. I think that may be often alledged as a reason when old feuds and animosities were the real cause.