

(£2,000) handed over to the two chiefs Rio and Piripi, appointed by the tribe to receive it. Instead of distributing it then and there, Rio and Piripi announced to the runanga that, as Hare Tipine and many others of their friends and relatives were at present fighting against the Queen at Taranaki and might possibly return, when they would wish to make them a present, they would lodge the money in the bank. The money thus lodged on a deposit receipt, was not withdrawn till May, 1864, when I believe it was fairly and equitably distributed.

Having thus given the history of the purchase, I proceed to notice General Cameron's charges and statements in regard to it.

In the private letter which General Cameron wrote to the Governor on the 28th of January, 1865, from Wanganui, he says—"Since I have been in this part of the world, I have made inquiries about the purchase of the Waitotara Block, and have reason to believe that it was a more iniquitous job than that of the Waitara Block." When challenged by Sir George Grey to inform him "of the nature of the enquiry he had made about the purchase of the Waitotara, what were his reasons for believing that it was an iniquitous job, and upon whose information his opinions were founded?" General Cameron, instead of meeting the challenge, says in his letter of the 12th of June, 1865,—“It is no part of my duty to collect information for your Excellency on such a subject as the purchase of the Waitotara Block, regarding which you have ample means of obtaining all the information you require, and I therefore decline entering into any correspondence with your Excellency on the subject.”

And yet General Cameron, in a letter addressed on the 7th of July, 1865, to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for War, professes to give a detailed account of the purchase of the Waitotara, explaining the way in which he obtained his information in these terms—"It was in riding into Wanganui a day or two after the engagement at Nukumarū that I received the above account, the truth or falsehood of which I had no means of ascertaining, but my informant was a very respectable settler, who had been a long time in the country and appeared well acquainted with the history of the transaction;" and then on this statement "the truth or falsehood of which (he says) he had no means of ascertaining" though in his private note of the 28th of January he had declared that he had made enquiries, General Cameron proceeds to found and forward to the Secretary of State for War the gravest possible charges against officers of the Colonial Government.

1st. With respect to General Cameron's assertion, "that the purchase of the Waitotara Block was a more iniquitous job than that of the Waitara Block," I unhesitatingly affirm that the validity of the purchase has never been in the slightest degree questioned by the Natives. Of this, the following proofs amongst others may be adduced: 1st. A reference to the deed of sale shows that the boundaries, both of the block and of all the reserves, were marked off by the principal chiefs themselves (in the case of the Waitara, it is notorious that the surveyors were turned off the instant they appeared on the block). 2nd. When some time afterwards it was agreed to reduce the Pakaraka Reserve, the same chief (Piripi), who had laid it off, pointed out the pegs and assisted in laying off the new boundary. 3rd. When the rebel Kingites in 1862 begged Potatau to accept the land and to forbid its sale, King Potatau decided that the land had been fairly purchased, belonged to the Queen, and ordered them to complete the sale. 4th. When, in October, 1864, the rebels refused me admission into the Weraroa Pa, they admitted that it was built on Queen's land. 5th. When the pa was captured, the chiefs who then surrendered, made a precisely similar admission to His Excellency Sir George Grey, adding that neither they nor anybody else had ever disputed the sale of the block. 6th. Major-General Cameron himself is compelled to confess that the troops under his command were unmolested as long as they were on Queen's land—"That it was not until the troops entered the village of Nukumarū (Hare Tipine's reserve) that their advance was opposed by the Natives, and that on that occasion a severe engagement ensued between them." 7th. It was not until General Cameron marched upon the Nukumarū Reserve that the road party was interfered with; so far from the Natives objecting to the road being made, they voluntarily allowed it to be carried through their reserves. Even that arch rebel Hare Tipine, who is still in arms against the Queen, when he heard that it was the intention to avoid his reserve, sent me word that I might take the road through any part of it, and that no opposition would be offered to the road being carried to the Waitotara River. The party who drove off the road party on the 24th of January, 1865, without injuring any of them, were not Waitotara Natives, but strangers on their way to join the rebels in their attack upon General Cameron at Nukumarū. 8th. When a band of Waikatos came to Waitotara to purchase supplies from storekeepers connected with the road parties, the Waitotara Natives compelled them to leave all their arms on the north side of the river, before they would allow them to cross—saying that they would not allow the road parties to be molested as long as they were engaged on the south side of the river.

Surely these facts sufficiently show that there is not the slightest foundation for General Cameron's opinion, that the purchase of the Waitotara was a more iniquitous job than that of the Waitara. The only question that has, as far as I am aware, been raised in connection with this purchase, is, whether certain Natives resident in Wellington were not entitled to some small present out of the purchase-money. But though these Natives, at my request, went to Wanganui for the purpose of preferring their claims, and actually lived ten days or a fortnight with the sellers at Pakaraka, they never uttered a word about their claim.

It is equally easy to dispose of General Cameron's other charges and statements, for there is scarcely a particle of truth in any one of them.

General Cameron states that "the land (*i.e.*, the Waitotara Block) was hurriedly sold (by the Government), without the usual notice by advertisement, to a few speculators in Wellington, at ten shillings an acre; the sum realised being £13,000, the amount paid to the Natives being £2,500. Hare Tipine and other chiefs protested against the sale at the time," &c. I annex a return to show how little truth is contained in this circumstantial statement. It shows that the usual notice of sale was given, the notice required by law being not less than one month, nor more than three. It also proves that instead of being sold to a few speculators in Wellington, thirty out of the thirty-eight purchasers were settlers resident at Wanganui, nearly all the remaining eight being residents it is true in Wellington, but who bought the land for the purpose of locating themselves upon it. By the same return it will be seen that the sum realised, instead of being £13,000, was only £5,259.