

of a single miner, wholly unknown to me, corroborated by specimens which might have been brought from any part of this or any other Colony.

Statements of the same kind, accompanied by specimens of quartz containing gold—in one case, at least, much richer than those exhibited by Culliford—said to have been taken from quartz reefs in various parts of the Province open to sale under the Waste Lands Act, but known to be more or less auriferous, have, on several occasions, been made to me by miners and others; but these statements had hitherto proved, on inquiry, to be exaggerated, or without foundation.

Had I accepted them as authentic, without inquiry, as you suggest that I might have done on the late occasion, and acted upon them by proclaiming the districts named to be gold fields, I should have been justly blamed for the disappointment, the loss, and the suffering which would have been occasioned by the consequent rush of miners to the spot.

A Warden upon an established gold field feels it to be his duty not to grant even a prospector's claim, until the alleged discovery has been verified by himself or by a mining surveyor—a precaution by which the ill-consequences of giving official sanction to mischievous or over-sanguine representations are avoided.

On referring to Mr. Daniell's report, you will see that you are mistaken in saying that "no steps were taken on that day to summon a Waste Lands Board." Culliford's purchase of sixteen acres was made about 1 o'clock on the 13th October, and those steps were taken within an hour afterwards; and the Board met at half-past 10 (not half-past 11) on the next morning, and by half-past 11 a Provincial *Gazette* containing the notice of the withdrawal of all the land in the district from sale, was printed and issued.

Looking to the fact that the third member of the Board resides at a distance of nine miles from town, I am justified in saying, as I have in the preceding paragraph, that "the utmost promptitude" was exhibited by the Board; and in adding the expression of my opinion that your remarks, written in the light of subsequent events, about "want of proper caution and promptitude," and of "reasonable alacrity" on the part of the Board, are wholly inapplicable to the circumstances.

I am unable to understand your observations upon the resolution of the Waste Lands Board, a copy of which was contained in my last letter. I quite fail to see how that resolution can have either increased or diminished the existing difficulties; still less how it can, as you seem to intimate, have originated them.

I have, however, to observe, that while I am sure the Board will at all times gladly receive suggestions or advice from the General Government, and will consider such suggestions with every respect and attention, and with every desire to meet the views of the Government, I do not think they could be justified in so far forfeiting their right to independent action, as to receive, without protest, a notice expressing those views in the form of a direction, and not couched in terms of ordinary courtesy.

I much regret that you should conceive that I have attempted to trace these serious difficulties to the action of the General Government in notifying the rights of the Crown; and I am unable to find any passages in this correspondence calculated to give rise to that impression on your part, although I have been, as still I am, of opinion that that action did tend to increase the serious character of those difficulties; and I repudiated your view of the effect of the withdrawal of that action as doing more than undoing (so far as possible) what had been done by the General Government, and as tending to relieve the Provincial Government and the Waste Lands Boards from that measure of difficulty which existed previously to the issue of the notice.

I believe that these unfortunate complications may most fairly be traced, not to the action of the General or of the Provincial Government, nor to that of the Waste Lands Board, but to the existing state of the law relating to the sale and disposal of the waste lands of the Crown, combined with the imperfect exploration and the total absence of survey of a considerable part of this province.

I have only to add, that the Government may rely upon my earnest and cordial co-operation in their endeavours to put an end to the present most unsatisfactory state of this matter, which I trust the inquiry now pending under Mr. Domett will materially tend to effect.

I have, &c.,

OSWALD CURTIS,

Superintendent.

The Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

#### No. 22.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. W. GISBORNE to the SUPERINTENDENT, Nelson.

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Wellington, 10th January, 1870.

SIR,—

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your Honor's letter of the 21st ultimo, and to thank you for the promise—contained in the last paragraph—of your Honor's earnest and cordial co-operation with the General Government in their endeavour to effect the settlement of the Wangapeka dispute.

I have, &c.,

W. GISBORNE.

His Honor the Superintendent, Nelson.

#### No. 23.

Copy of Petition of MINERS and INHABITANTS of WANGAPEKA for an Inquiry into the Wangapeka Land Sales.

To His Excellency Sir George Ferguson Bowen, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same.