

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE PURCHASE FROM THE NATIVES OF THE
FORTY MILE BUSH, HAWKE'S BAY.

No. 1.

His Honor J. D. ORMOND to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Napier, 10th September, 1869.

During my late stay in Wellington, I had the honor to bring under your notice that the Deputy Superintendent of this Province had directed the cessation of negotiations which were in progress for the purchase of the block of land known as the Forty Mile Bush from the Native proprietors by the Provincial Government. This course was forced upon Mr. Rhodes from the fact that the Loan Fund, from which it had been proposed to provide funds for the purchase of the land, was almost exhausted.

I am informed by Mr. Locke, the gentleman who was conducting the purchase, that at the time the negotiations were stopped the arrangements with the Native owners were in a forward state, and that no difficulty stood in the way of the completion of the purchase of the block, containing about 250,000 acres. It was suggested to me by the Deputy Superintendent that I should urge the General Government to complete the purchase which the Provincial Government was unable to carry out; and I accordingly brought the subject under your notice, but in the pressure of business at that time it could not receive consideration.

Since my return here I have made some inquiry into the position of the arrangements, and I find that the negotiations for the purchase of the block were in a very forward state; that the Province has expended a considerable sum in survey and other preliminary expenses, and that the completion of the purchase was comparatively easy; also, that Mr. Locke has not closed the negotiations with the Natives, so that they can be reopened at once, if thought desirable.

My object now in addressing you upon this subject is to state my opinion, that it is of great general importance to secure the district in question for settlement; and that the establishment of a body of colonists in so central a position, on what must be the main line of road connecting the northern settlements with Wellington, is really a matter of Colonial interest.

The block in question is peculiarly suited for settlement; and the success of the sister district of the Wairarapa shows that the small proprietor finds that kind of country peculiarly suited to his wants and requirements; whilst in the magnificent timber which the block contains there is every prospect of success to the capitalist who may seek investment there.

In a political point of view, the establishment of a European settlement at the Forty Mile Bush would be valuable, inasmuch as it would necessitate the completion of the main lines of road between the East and West Coasts, and also between Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay.

In the case of the road between the East and West Coast, only some thirty miles requires to be made to complete a thoroughly good road (there is at present a fair bush road) between Manawatu on the West Coast and Napier on the East, whilst a further distance of about twenty miles of road would give a coach road from Wellington *via* the Wairarapa to Napier; also the planting a settlement of Europeans midway between the different districts I have named could not but have beneficial effect in securing the permanent peace of the Colony.

For all these reasons I would urge that it is of Colonial importance that the opportunity of securing this district for settlement should not be lost. The Provincial Council of Hawke's Bay would I feel certain do everything in its power to promote the different objects I have referred to; and if the General Government could see its way to provide funds for the purchase of the land, it might be possible to take advantage of the services of the Commissioners about to proceed to England to secure the settlement of the block under special arrangements with an English Company, who might have the land handed over to it for the sum it may be bought for from the Natives, on condition that the Company settle it from England, and provide funds for connecting it by roads with the settled districts in its vicinity.

A sum of about £10,000, in addition to what has already been spent, would, I believe, secure the purchase of the block now under negotiation, and with little difficulty the purchase could be extended to the Wairarapa.

The Provincial Council will shortly now be called together, and I shall be much obliged if you will acquaint me whether the General Government will be able to take action in the direction I have suggested, as, if so, the Hawke's Bay Council could be asked to give their assent and assistance.

I have, &c.,

J. D. ORMOND.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

No. 2.

The Hon. W. GISBORNE to His Honor J. D. ORMOND.

Colonial Secretary's Office,

SIR,—

Wellington, 25th September, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, addressed to the Native Minister, in which you state that negotiations for the purchase of the Forty Mile Bush were interrupted owing to the want of funds at the disposal of the Provincial Government of Hawke's