

of an opportunity which might not recur, and satisfactorily concluded the dispute, and in doing so he felt it necessary to make the additional reserves to which you refer, and much of which, as you admit, is land of a worthless character.

I venture to think that you have not sufficiently estimated the advantageous position in which, on a review of the whole question, the Province of Wellington is placed by the final solution of the long-pending difficulties attending this matter. The entire block purchased by you contains, by estimate of Mr. Stewart, the Sub-Provincial Surveyor, 240,000 acres. After deducting the awards made by the Court, the reserves for friendly Natives made by yourself, and those added by the Hon. Mr. McLean—say, 25,000 acres at the outside—the province receives 215,000 out of 240,000, or about nine-tenths of the whole. As not three years ago the dissentient Ngatiraukawa claimed it all, subject only to some small deductions in behalf of the Ngatiapa, and afterwards offered, as a compromise, to take 80,000 or 90,000 acres, the result of the long-pending litigation and final adjustment cannot be regarded as disadvantageous to the province, or as leaving the Government, and yourself its Commissioner, in other than a triumphant position in the matter; while the acquisition of the district with the friendly concurrence of the Natives, instead of at best their sulky acquiescence, is an advantage not to be lightly disregarded, and which is cheaply purchased at the price of from 10,000 to 15,000 acres of land, not all of the best quality.

Negotiations for the purchase by the Crown of Native lands, conducted as they are with persons of an uncivilized race, and attended by other exceptional difficulties, cannot be regulated by rigid rules of procedure, and if the purchases are to be made satisfactorily, or, in other words, if peaceable possession is to be secured, considerable latitude must necessarily be allowed in the conduct of those negotiations; and the Government cannot admit, so long as the purchased land is for the special benefit of a province, that occasional additional expenses in supplementing a purchase, and securing, so to speak, the goodwill of the land, should be defrayed at the cost of the colony, and not of the province interested.

If, as I understand is the case, a reserve has been made by the Native Minister for the satisfaction of Native claims to land not in the block in question, but in the Seventy-Mile Bush Block, the purchase of which is under negotiation, the question connected therewith can be specially dealt with under the Fourth Part of "The Public Works and Immigration Act, 1870," relating to acquisition by the Crown of lands in the North Island.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
W. GISBORNE.

In addition to the representation Dr. Featherston was formally making to the General Government, he addressed this telegram to Mr. McLean, who was in Auckland at the time:—

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 9th February, 1871.

I FIND that you have given away to sellers, non-sellers, and parties excluded by the Native Land Court, some 12,000 acres of the Manawatu. Kemp, by whose authority nobody knows, has since given away another 4,000 acres. Part of the land thus given away is swamp, sandy, and not of much value, but by far the greatest portion is the choicest and most valuable land in the whole block. I deny the right of the Government thus to deal with the provincial estate. I have claimed, on behalf of the province, payment for the whole of this land at the upset price of £1 per acre, and that the expense of the survey of these 16,000 acres, and of yours and Kemp's mission, should not be charged provincially. The Cabinet, consisting of Fox, Gisborne, and Sewell, yesterday refused to admit this claim, or any claim whatever. I do not know whether they have consulted you and Bell, but it is a matter of deep regret to me that I shall be obliged, under these circumstances, to record my protest, as Superintendent, against the Manawatu arrangement.

The Hon. D. McLean, Auckland.

I. E. FEATHERSTON,  
Superintendent.

Whereupon Mr. McLean replied as follows:—

(Telegram.)

Auckland, 15th February, 1871.

To effect any arrangement of the Manawatu question which would lead to the peaceable occupation of this district by Europeans, it was absolutely necessary that additional reserves should be made for the Natives. With the exception of 1,800 acres adjoining the award of the Native Land Court at Oroua, the greater portion of the reserve made by me is composed of sand-hills, swamp, and broken bush. I have written to Mr. Kemp for an explanation of his reasons for increasing the extent of land which was deemed sufficient for the tribes living opposite to Mr. Fox's, and I hope soon to get his report. His absence at the Bay of Islands occasions some delay. I had no conception when I undertook the duty that the question was surrounded by so many difficulties—not the least among them being an attempt on the part of a considerable section of the sellers to repudiate the sale altogether. The non-sellers whose claims were reconsidered by the Court, computed the area to which they were entitled at 19,000 acres, besides which they sought compensation for losses and for expenditure of time in vindicating their titles. These claims were all reduced to the lowest extent which the Natives would accept. Under these and many other adverse circumstances, and taking into consideration how troublesome and expensive the delay in settling these disputes had been to the interests of Wellington, I did my utmost on behalf of the province and colony to bring about as reasonable an adjustment of these interminable questions as could possibly be effected, consistently with a peaceable occupation of the district by European settlers. The question might have been left in abeyance, but then it would have proved a source of lingering irritation and annoyance, which at any moment might eventuate in a rupture with the Natives. I feel certain that were you on the spot, and cognizant of the increasing obstacles in the way of a settlement, you would support the only adjustment by which the evil consequences mentioned above could have been averted. I therefore feel surprised and disappointed that you propose to protest against the action taken in the matter, as interfering with the provincial estates, especially as the Government did not move till subjected to considerable pressure from the