

STATEMENT

MADE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF WELLINGTON TO SIR FRANCIS DILLON BELL, TO WHOM HAS BEEN REFERRED THE CLAIM OF THE PROVINCE OF WELLINGTON IN RESPECT OF CERTAIN LANDS TAKEN IN THE RANGITIKEI-MANAWATU BLOCK.

THE total area of the Rangitikei-Manawatu Block, as originally purchased by Dr. Featherston, the General Government Commissioner for the Extinguishment of the Native Title, is computed by the Chief Surveyor at 220,000 acres. This area was diminished by 27,000 acres, in consequence of an alteration in the northern boundary of the block, thus reducing the area of the block to 193,000 acres.

Out of this block of 193,000 acres, Dr. Featherston awarded 3,361 acres as reserves for the Natives; and the Native Land Court awarded 6,226 acres as further Native reserves. After deducting these several reserves from the block of 193,000 acres, there remained, as provincial estate, 183,413 acres. Subsequently Mr. McLean supplemented the two awards above referred to, by a further award of reserves amounting to 13,875 acres.

The accompanying tracing exhibits the relative positions of those reserves, a distinct tint distinguishing the three classes of reserves.

The province advances a claim for a payment by the colony in respect of the said 13,875 acres so taken from its territorial estate.

It will not be contended that this was not provincial estate, not only because it was virtually recognized as such by the gazetting of the extinguishment of the Native title, but also because the special intervention of the Supreme Legislature has become necessary in order to enable Crown grants to be issued to the Natives for these additional reserves.

The block of 183,413 acres cost the province £43,155; therefore, the 13,875 acres taken out of it have actually cost the province £3,264, exclusive of the survey, the cost of which has been £1,040 12s. Altogether, therefore, the Province of Wellington is out of pocket by the taking of these 13,875 acres by the sum of £4,305 2s. which has been expended on them, and is exclusive of any consideration of the question of the loss of the land itself.

It may be here stated that the province has also expended £719 in surveying the reserves awarded severally by Dr. Featherston and the Native Land Court, for which it, however, prefers no claim.

The accompanying tracing exhibits a classification of the block of 193,000 acres in respect of prices actually obtained from the sales of land effected within the respective classified areas. From this it appears that had the 13,875 acres continued provincial estate, it would have, in all probability, realized as follows, namely:—

9,723 acres, @ 30s. per acre	..	..	..	£14,584 10 0
1,686 acres, @ 20s. per acre	..	..	..	1,686 0 0
2,466 acres, @ 8s. 3d. per acre	..	..	..	1,017 5 0
Making a total of	..	..	..	£17,287 15 0

If from this total there be deducted the sum of £4,305 2s. already referred to, the actual outlay incurred by the province—and therefore an amount about the propriety of refunding which it may be assumed there can be no doubt—there remains the sum of £12,982 13s. to represent the loss to the province of territorial revenue which would have been available for public works.

The question then presents itself, Is the province to suffer the loss of all or any portion of this sum of £12,982 13s.?

In order to arrive at an equitable consideration of this point, it is submitted, on behalf of the province, that the action of Mr. McLean was in the interest of the peace of the colony as well as for the advantage of a particular portion of it. For if it be contended that if these additional awards had not been made the province would not have obtained peaceable possession of the remainder of their estate, owing to the obstruction of the Native claimants, it must follow that, in proportion as weight is to be attached to this view, a weight must be attached to the view that the peace of the colony was proportionally preserved.

On behalf of the province, great weight is attached to the statements contained in the letter of Mr. A. F. Halcombe to the Superintendent of Wellington, dated 15th May, 1871, and to the postscript. (Copy attached.)

Against this will have to be weighed the statements rebutting this view.

The Superintendent takes the liberty of saying, that if the moiety of the sum of £12,982 13s. were paid to the province, and the £4,305 2s. actually expended on the 13,875 acres refunded, making a total of £10,796 8s. 6d., he believes that fair justice would be distributed between the colony and the province, on a question which has been already attended with much delay and vexation.

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT,
Superintendent.