

VI.—*Areas.*

Excluding transactions completed previously, the lands surveyed this year (as nearly as I can ascertain them) are 263,185 acres; surveys requisitioned, 57,000 acres; will be requisitioned next spring, 70,000; (390,185 acres). Also there are—of negotiations in abeyance, 30,000 acres; (420,185 acres); suspended negotiations resumed, 54,000 acres; negotiations suspended, 48,000 acres. Total, 522,185 acres.

The surveys performed show that the areas of the lands had been slightly under-estimated—226,000 acres estimated were found by survey to contain 230,926 acres.

VII.—The total area I have purchased and leased in this district, the same having been surveyed, or about to be surveyed during the ensuing summer, is 594,882 acres.

VIII.—*Opposition and Intrigues of Europeans who have interfered with my Negotiations.*

This has formed the most prominent feature of the conditions against which I have deemed it my duty to contend. I had to advert to this subject in my annual report last year, and I find myself compelled to mention it again. The evil has not diminished, although its organization and ramifications may have become more apparent. And, first, I would say that where settlers have had prior transactions and possessed prior claims I have made it my rule to abstain from interfering with those transactions; but at the same time I have expected them to refrain from interfering with the negotiations I have entered into on behalf of the Government. More than this on the part of the Government would not be acceptable to Europeans, and less than this on part of the latter would not be just to the Government.

It seemed necessary, therefore, to draw a line somewhere, and I have endeavoured to draw it where the equitable and legal rights of the public should be protected from the efforts of individuals—be they who they may—who may seek to interfere and deprive the public of those rights. The necessity of such a rule appears to be in proportion to the means of the individuals, either by ability, wealth, influence, &c.; a rule is necessary, too, to meet that class of persons who jump claims to be bought out.

Now it has been my lot until quite lately—*i.e.*, until the land was gazetted under the Immigration and Public Works Acts—to be compelled to struggle, single-handed, more than twelve months with a very powerful and a very remarkable European opposition—an opposition that I feel sure has spent, directly and indirectly (their expenditure in public-houses alone is enormous), far more—perhaps five times as much—money than I have paid, but whose utmost effort has proved quite inadequate to create more than a passing European difficulty. The persons instigating this opposition have possessed means and influence so large that had I been less firm or less assured of the justice of the cause represented I should not have been able to prevail hitherto as I have. The stake they have in view being, as I conceive, not merely the land interfered with but the supremacy in land purchasing, and the power to filibuster with impunity, and to dictate to Government in all future land transactions.

I have characterized this opposition as remarkable; and in doing so I may state that it is remarkable in itself; it is remarkable also in the unusual facilities and protection it has received from the Judge and the District Officer separately and combined. In itself it is remarkable in the unscrupulous character of the means employed, in the nature and extent of its schemes, its extraordinary avenues of official information, and its hitherto reckless and largely secret expenditure; while, in unusual facilities and protection received, it is noticeable in the District Officer, Mr. Locke, having granted permission to execute surveys in favour of Europeans over extensive tracts of country at a time when he knew that I was negotiating the same and had paid considerable sums upon them; it is noticeable in that on the 7th July last the District Officer brought Captain Read—one of the Europeans interested—to me, and asked me to give him (Captain Read) money upon these lands, with which request I refused to comply, on the ground that the land belonged by agreement to the public, and that I would not pay over again for it.

Further, Mr. Locke, supported by Judge Rogan, by representations based upon an imaginary Native difficulty, did defeat an attempt of mine, supported by Mr. Clarke, to obtain a proclamation under the Immigration and Public Works Acts, whereby for many months they became the means of shielding from the operations of the law the proceedings and actions of the Europeans who had interfered with the purchases and leases of the Government.

Now that the land is proclaimed, opposition will be futile, when judgments are given and title is established. Opposition has been very strong, however; in illustration of it, and of the spirit abroad among those who have considered themselves specially exempt, I may instance the case of Mr. Campbell, Resident Magistrate at Waiapu, who, under cover of an authority from Mr. Locke, caused land to be surveyed that I had leased before him—that I had advanced rent upon and was surveying. The Natives of his survey party seized my surveyors' instruments, twice stopping the party. The cost to the country by these seizures—in pay to the survey party during detention, in expenses of interpreters, &c.—was about £100. Mr. Locke knew that I had acquired the land for the Government before he granted the permission to Mr. Campbell's surveyor, and when I asked afterwards for an explanation, he made a statement that I do not deem expedient to repeat here. Mr. Campbell, jun., as the agent or partner of his father, the Resident Magistrate, had been informed in writing, before he treated for the land or had paid money upon it, of the prior right of the Government; yet a higher bid was made, and Natives who had taken money from me were induced to go over to him, excusing themselves on the plea that we both were Government men. I have mentioned this matter somewhat fully to show the nature of the spirit against which I have been compelled to contend, as well as the unexpected quarters from which it has emanated, not from any desire to attach any particular value to the opposition so raised on this occasion.

The case is quite different, however, in the blocks called Waingaromia, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, otherwise known as Arakihi, Parariki, Tauwharepara, and Waihora, where Messrs. Read and Cooper have