

## No. 3.

Mr. JAMES MACKAY to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Thames, 31st July, 1877.

In accordance with your request, I have the honor to report on the state of land purchases in this district; and I regret that my attendance at the Native Land Court at Ohinemuri prevented my doing so at an earlier date.

In a recent communication you pointed out that several blocks of land under negotiation had been shown in my returns for two years as being "nearly completed," and no further progress had been made in acquiring them; and you further assumed that this arose from my having more work in hand than I could accomplish, and suggested that Mr. J. W. Preece should assist me in completing the purchase of those blocks.

In reply to that statement, I have the honor to inform you that the non-completion of the purchase of the blocks indicated arose from circumstances over which I had no control.

In the case of the Omaha West No. 1 Block the land was granted to twenty-five persons, twenty-four of whom executed a deed of conveyance to the Crown, the remaining grantee (Hohepa te Rauhihi) refused to sell, through Hauhau scruples.

The Onetai No. 1 Block was granted to nineteen Natives, seventeen of whom executed the deed of conveyance. Hohepa te Rauhihi was a grantee, and again declined to sell. The other grantee (Marara Hauata) died, and a succession order for her interest has not been made by the Native Land Court.

The Omaha West No. 2 Block was granted to forty-one persons, thirty-four of whom executed the deed of conveyance; seven refused to sign. At the last sitting of the Native Land Court the shares of three of the dissentients were apportioned to them in land, and the other four have since agreed to sell their interests.

Omaha West No. 3 Block was granted to ten persons; nine have executed the deed of conveyance, and one (Hone Mahia) is in the King country.

Onetai No. 2 Block was granted to ten persons, six of whom have executed the deed of conveyance; four declined to do so in consequence of some of their relations being buried on a part of the block. After lengthened negotiations they have agreed to make a reserve of the burial-ground, and their claims can be arranged for.

Mangakirikiri No. 1 and No. 3 Blocks were granted to sixteen persons (eight in each); nine signatures have been obtained to the deed of conveyance; the other grantees died. It was only at the last sitting of the Native Land Court that succession orders were made in favour of the heirs of the deceased persons.

Ruapekapeka Block was granted to six persons; five have executed the deed of conveyance, the sixth is at Taranaki with the Hauhaus, residing in the interior of that district.

Whitipiorua Block was granted to nine persons; five have executed the deed, one objects to do so, and three are absent from this district.

Te Weiti Block was originally granted to nine persons. The principal of these died, and his son Te Tarapa, who was already a grantee, succeeded to his interest. The eight shareholders then agreed to sell 5,000 acres of the block to the Crown in order to defray the expenses of the *tangi* for Maka Puhata's death. Before the deed could be completed another grantee (Eparamia te Wheoro) died. The seven remaining duly executed the deed of conveyance for the eight interests held by them (Te Tarapa having his own and that of his deceased father, Maka Puhata). It only then remained to arrange for the claim of Eparamia te Wheoro being conveyed (he had joined in the first agreement and received the money). I applied to the Native Land Court, through Mr. J. W. Preece, to award to the Crown Eparamia te Wheoro's share in the 5,000 acres sold to the Government, and to grant a succession order for his interest in the remainder of the block to his heir, an infant. The Court would not entertain the claim of the Crown, but decided in favour of the infant over the whole. This has effectually prevented the completion of the deed of conveyance, and there appears to be no remedy but to make a reserve for the infant's interest.

Having mislaid your letter, I am unable to remember exactly the remainder of the blocks which you requested me to allow Mr. J. W. Preece to assist in the purchase of; but they are all, I believe, delayed for similar reasons. I would also draw your attention to the fact that the largest proportion of the work has been accomplished, and it is to my direct interest to complete the conveyances as soon as possible in order to receive my commission on the purchases alluded to, which cover a considerable area, and, as seen in a pecuniary sense, is of importance to myself. I will next proceed to allude to other blocks under negotiation, and which you desired me to complete personally.

The Moehau or Cape Colville Block has for generations been a fertile source of dispute between the Ngatitamatera, Ngatinannau, Ngatiwhanaunga, and Ngatimaru tribes. I have held numerous meetings to settle the disputes and arrange the subdivisions of the block. This has at last been accomplished to the satisfaction of all concerned. Ample reserves have been made for the requirements of the Ngatitamatera tribe, which have been marked off on the plan and deed of conveyance, but requiring survey to indicate the exact position on the ground.

The Waikawau and Ohinemuri cases are so closely intermingled, in consequence of both blocks being owned by the Ngatitamatera tribe, that it has been found impossible to deal with them separately. It happens that some of these people are very obstructive Hauhaus, which has retarded the final arrangement of both questions. I am happy to report that the objectors are gradually giving way; and that on my recommendation they recently requested the Native Land Court to adjourn all the cases in which they were interested from Shortland to Ohinemuri. The Court was adjourned there accordingly, and resulted in the opposing faction becoming thoroughly disunited; and they are now more inclined to come to terms. When it is remembered that on a former occasion, when the Native Land Court attempted to hold a sitting at Ohinemuri, it was compelled to desist through the obstinacy and violent conduct of the Hauhau party, it will perhaps be allowed that considerable progress has been made in the right direction.