

By the same mail that brought your letter there came one from a Mr. Grace, son of the missionary, I suppose, in which he states that at least one-fourth of the country included in my lease from the Maoris is what he has been "negotiating" for for some time past, and coolly asks me not to include this in my arrangement. I enclose his letter, which will show you what he is after. I shall write a few lines to him myself.

Touching the company business, whatever you do, don't lose your temper; don't, for my sake, pitch up the thing because of any injudicious meddling on the part of Whitmore or any one else. I have cautioned Whitmore and Russell both against even the appearance of anything like independent negotiation before the Maoris. It seems to me that promptitude and decision are all equally essential in conducting this matter to a satisfactory issue. I hope to be up by the mail steamer in January—that is, by end of the month. Hold out to then, whatever you do. Meanwhile, believe me,

Yours sincerely,

ALFRED COX.

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Enclosure 6 in No. 1.

The Hon. H. R. RUSSELL to Mr. S. LOCKE.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Mount Herbert, 26th December, 1867.

I have received yours of 23rd December, and am happy to learn that Captain Birch's block does not interfere with the one we are after.

I had a long letter from Dr. Hector last week, and he has sent me two sketches, with a particular description of the country. I send you a copy of these for your private guidance as our negotiator. You will see that Captain Birch comes very close to us, and if Johnston has gone up again, with young Birch, and probably several others, I would apprehend that we shall be interfered with. It is of the utmost consequence to our company that we get sufficient extent of country. Then, again, as to McLean's negotiations, unless the Birches have taken a part of his country, he must be after a part of ours, and I have no doubt he intends to get hold of an immense block if he can. I offered to him to join our party, but he has declined; so I conclude he thinks he can do better without us. On all these grounds, I see the greatest necessity for very prompt action. Could you not go up again at once, and use your influence on the spot? We must be prepared to sow some ground-bait I suppose, and you must use your discretion as to this; and I shall at once provide the needful.

Your terms for the negotiation are to be as you state—£300 if the blocks are got, and two guineas per day and extra expenses if unsuccessful; and I am relying on your experience and influence to carry us through successfully.

The fixing of the rents will be the principal thing after you get the promise of the country. We must not pay too high, as there is no doubt, from Hector's report, that the climate over a large area of the country about the Rangipo and Patea is severe for a long period each season. Please pay particular notice to what he says on the subject. It won't do to pay too high rents at first, like Cox, unless we get corresponding advantages. I had a few lines from Cox last steamer, and I shall hear from him again by the mail steamer, now arrived, I suppose. I hope he will return on the 15th January.

You should read the enclosed extracts from Hector's journal very carefully along with his sketches; and you will please keep these entirely to yourself and for the use of our party, as Hector does not wish his remarks to become public. It has cost me a good deal of valuable time to-day to copy it, so I hope you will study it carefully.

Write me as soon as you have anything to say, and let me know your probable movements.

Yours truly,

H. R. RUSSELL.

S. Locke, Esq., Napier.

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Enclosure 7 in No. 1.

The Hon. H. R. RUSSELL to Mr. S. LOCKE.

MY DEAR LOCKE,—

Mount Herbert, 30th December, 1876.

I have seen Colonel Whitmore, and had a long talk with him over our Taupo affairs, and am more than ever satisfied that it is necessary for you to go on to Patea and Taupo without a day's unnecessary delay, otherwise our interests are sure to suffer, and the end will be that our great scheme will dwindle down into something that won't be worth taking up. With active parties teasing and tempting the Natives on the spot, our waiting policy is sure to end in failure. From Hector's sketch I can't see where parties can get runs without encroaching on our block of 250,000 to 300,000 in the Patea, and I imagine that both McLean and the Birches are contesting the country with us. You can only find this out on the spot, and I earnestly hope that you will be able to go up at once, and to devote the necessary time to make arrangements that will be considered binding by the Native owners.

I have arranged with Whitmore to start about the 15th of January, but you would require to be there some time previously to see the Native owners and to go carefully over the blocks, so that when we arrive there may be no difficulty about the terms, after we have also gone over the country.

Let me know by return of bearer when you can go, and if you want any further instructions. I am now very anxious on the subject, as absent partners will be likely to attribute blame to me and Whitmore.

Did I send you Hector's sketches and Patea memorandum? If not, I have mislaid them, and can't find them to make a copy for you. It will be a great pity if they are lost, but you must just do the best you can without them, and Whitmore can give you a very good sketch of the country.

Yours in haste,

H. R. RUSSELL.

S. Locke, Esq., Napier.