

furnish you with such a plan, and locate the sections to be retained (as per plan herewith) upon it. If you consider that it would be advisable to cut the property up into allotments, please have the various allotments, and any new roads that may be necessary in order to give access to them, shown upon the plan to be prepared and sent in with your report. In reporting you will of course state whether you consider it would be preferable to sell the land outright, or only to lease it; and, if you consider that the latter course would be the best to adopt, then please state how long you think the leases should be for, and also make a note of any special stipulations which you think they should contain.

H. J. H. BLOW,

Acting Under-Secretary for Public Works.

P.S.—Your report should be accompanied by a schedule showing the numbers, areas, and positions of the various allotments, and the price that you estimate each will realize, and generally should afford the fullest possible information on the subject.—H. J. H. B.

H. M. Brewer, Esq., Land Purchase Officer, Auckland.

No. 27.

Mr. P. H. MASON to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Arundale, Devonport, Auckland, 18th March, 1886.

Would you oblige me with the reason why the Government have given £17,000 for Mr. Stark's property for defence purposes at the North Shore, which stands in the rate-book last year as valued at £3,500; and it is well known that land has not increased in value during the last year, indeed that it is very difficult to effect a sale. As a ratepayer I feel that I shall have to find my proportion of the sum thus expended, and there are many here who would like to have the matter explained, as, in its present state, it seems an unreasonable sum, even if the gentleman had been unwilling to sell, which is well known not to be the case.

Yours, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

PHILIP H. MASON.

No. 28.

The ACTING UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS to Mr. P. H. MASON.

Public Works Office, Wellington, 26th March, 1886.

SIR,—

Re *Land purchased from Mr. Stark for Battery-site at Takapuna.*

I am directed by the Minister for Public Works to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 18th instant, addressed to the Hon. the Premier, in which you ask to be informed as to the reasons which induced the Government to pay the sum of £17,000 for Mr. Stark's property at the North Shore, Auckland, which has been taken for defence purposes.

In reply, I am to state that the Government, after making full inquiries as to the value of the portion of Mr. Stark's land which was absolutely required to be taken for the battery, and also as to the value of the whole of the property, and after taking into consideration all the circumstances surrounding the case, deemed it best, in the interests of the colony at large, to purchase the whole of Mr. Stark's land. I am further directed to state, in reference to the price paid by the Government for the property, that the Minister is not prepared to enter into any discussion on the subject.

I have, &c.,

H. J. H. BLOW,

Mr. P. H. Mason, Auckland.

Acting Under-Secretary for Public Works.

No. 29.

The LAND PURCHASE OFFICER, Auckland, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

Public Works Office, Auckland, 22nd March, 1886.

In answer to your telegram of 23rd February. In accordance with your instructions, I went to Takapuna and saw Mr. Stark *re* the venetian blinds. He declined to make any charge for them, saying he intended them to go with the house.

H. M. BREWER,

Land Purchase Officer.

C. Y. O'Connor, Esq., Under-Secretary for Public Works.

No. 30.

The ACTING UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS to the LAND PURCHASE OFFICER, Auckland.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 30th March, 1886.

Re my memorandum of 22nd, asking you for report as to best way of disposing of balance of Mr. Stark's property, Ministers are very anxious to get your report at earliest possible moment. Hon. Mr. Richardson therefore directs me to request that you will lay everything else aside until this is done. I am further to ask you to wire, on receipt of this, the date when you expect to be able to report; and also to ask you to wire me again when report has actually been posted.

H. M. Brewer, Esq., Land Purchase Officer, Auckland.

H. J. H. BLOW.