

will be either done or attempted at the general meeting of the Chiefs; but it appears to be desirable that a rudimentary sketch of a simple system of Native local self-government should be prepared by persons competent to the task, to be laid before the meeting for their consideration. Much will be gained if they leave the meeting with the conviction that whenever they desire some better system than they now possess, the Government will be ready to aid them with advice in framing it; and with contributions towards the support of Native Magistrates to carry it into effect.

If judiciously dealt with, I believe that the present movement in the Native mind may be turned to good account; and that few of the Chiefs who have ever formally acknowledged it, will continue to be desirous of throwing off the sovereignty of the Crown.

The Native Land question remains to be considered: and on its satisfactory solution the ultimate fate of the Maori race no doubt materially depends.

The true principle of dealing with the Waste Lands of the Colony is, of course, to acquire and dispose of them in such a manner as may be most conducive to the permanent interests of both races, and to the successful colonisation of the country. But the practice which has commonly prevailed, but without any intentional injustice, has been to obtain land from the Natives for the smallest possible price, and to dispose of it in such a manner as might seem to be most advantageous for the colonising race. The natural consequences of this one-sided, short-sighted policy are now beginning to be felt. Seeing their own race about to be outnumbered by our countrymen—seeing the larger part of the territory, of which they were once the absolute masters, already in the hands of the stranger—seeing that they have added nothing to their permanent advantage by disposing of it, but being sensible, on the contrary, of their rapidly waning power,—some of the Chiefs in the central part of the Northern Island have formed a league amongst themselves to hold fast the land which still remains to them. And if it were consistent with the Native character to persevere steadily, for any considerable length of time, in any particular line of action, this combination against the sale of land would threaten to prove a formidable obstacle to the peaceable occupation of the country. And the very eagerness of the settlers to obtain possession of the land of the Natives has a direct tendency to defeat their object. But if, instead of being urged to sell their land, the Natives were positively prohibited from doing so, they would soon become as clamorous to dispose of it as they are now determined to retain it.

With a view to facilitate the acquisition of the surplus lands of the natives for purposes of colonisation, I have already suggested in a previous memorandum (Sept. 6, 1859), that the partition of land held by them in common should be encouraged;—that when the ownership shall have been ascertained after careful inquiry by a competent tribunal, and when it shall have been divided amongst them by mutual agreement amongst themselves, that it should be competent for the Governor and council nominated by the Crown (and either with or without an intermediate transfer from the natives to the Crown) to issue Crown grants to each member of the tribe of his own allotted portion, either in fee simple absolutely, with full power to dispose of it, or under such limitations and restrictions and with such powers of leasing, &c., as to the Governor and council may, in each case, seem meet.

A grant in fee simple to the individual members of a tribe of a specific portion of the common land would confer a title much more valuable in every respect than that which they possess, while holding the land in common under the Treaty of Waitangi. For, so long as it is held in common by the tribe, it cannot be sold even to the Crown without the consent of all the claimants: and even when all are willing to sell, it can be disposed of to the Crown alone; and there being but a single buyer and no competition, the price given is below the market value. But when the land is divided in severalty by grants from the Crown, each claimant receives both a better holding title and a better selling title. While he continues to hold he has the security of a grant from the Crown, and he may not only sell when he pleases and without reference to the other members of the tribe, but he may sell not only to the Crown but to any of Her Majesty's subjects, and obtain the full market value of his land.

By empowering the Governor thus to individualise the native title, two important objects would be attained. Much of the land held by individual natives under a Crown title, would speedily come into the market and become available for purposes of colonisation, and the Governor's power and influence over the natives would be materially increased. But the granting of individual Crown titles with full power of sale should, of course, only be made in localities suitable for immediate settlement, and where the natives are peaceable and well-disposed, and should be firmly withheld from any district in which the natives are likely to be troublesome and unruly. And there is no doubt that, wisely exercised, this power may be turned to very valuable account as a moral agent in the government of the native race.

In a country like New Zealand, already partially occupied by an aboriginal race, it is necessary that the Government should retain to itself the power of directing the course of colonisation, and of limiting it to localities suitable for the purpose; and it is for this reason there are objections, of a practical character, why, except under well-considered conditions and restrictions, the settlers should not be allowed to deal directly with the natives for the purchase of their land. But it is not easy to see on what principle we can claim to make a profit by the purchase and sale of native land. Let the native owners of the land themselves receive the full market value of it. Let the Government act simply as agents for the natives in the disposal of it, and after retaining the full cost of survey, &c., pay over the proceeds to the native owners: and there is every reason to believe that the surplus lands of the natives would become available for purposes of colonisation as quickly as may be reasonably required. And, if the natives could be induced to invest the purchase-money or any considerable portion of it, at interest for a fixed period in government securities, or to commute it for government annuities, the natives would receive a permanent advantage in exchange for their land, and the Government would have the