

which therefore ought, in my opinion, to be permanently secured to them. The taking this, or indeed any land, without injustice to individual proprietors, will involve settling all the land claims in the district, in order to adjust the burden (or rather benefit as it would ultimately be) fairly upon all the different landowners.

I have several times explained that a belt of excellent land, amounting to about 50,000 acres, fringes the harbour. Inland of this, from Te Papa to Arangatete, there runs a narrow belt of very steep and broken trachytic hills, the land on which, though good and well adapted for grazing, is unfitted by its steepness for subdivision into small allotments for Military Settlers. Inland of that, again, the land is of the best quality, with the advantage of adjacent timber, but intersected by deep gullies, and so commanded from the Thames Valley as to be scarcely fitted for European settlement, at all events for a coter population, until the place of that original nursery of the King movement and of rebellion is secured. The whole, then, of this back land, comprising four-fifths of the Ngaiterangi territory is at present valueless to the Natives, while the front land is being eagerly sought after by speculators, the Natives having in some instances been offered £4 an acre for portions of it, notwithstanding the risk of confiscation to which it is undoubtedly liable. But were the front land taken by the Government, and occupied in strength by Military Settlers, then the back land would form a vast fund out of which all inequalities could be adjusted. With the security afforded by the settlement in front, it would soon rise to great value; and the division of the whole among the individual claimants would confer upon every Native a freehold of greater enhanced value, and would soon render the small Ngaiterangi tribe the richest in New Zealand.

It is clear that to effect this it would be necessary to proclaim the whole Ngaiterangi territory under the Settlements Act, and to adjust all the land claims within it on the most comprehensive plan.

I am enabled to assert that down to last January this might have been done without serious opposition from any section of the tribe, and with the cordial support of a great part of it. The present condition of affairs is indeed very different; but the necessity of grappling with the question and dealing with it comprehensively becomes more urgent as the difficulties attending its execution increase. The non-settlement of the land question is looked upon by some of the Natives as a deception and a wrong, while others affect to regard it as an abandonment by the Government of the intention to confiscate any portion of their lands. Since the coming into operation of "The Native Lands Act," this latter view of the matter has actually greatly preponderated. It is not to be expected that the Natives should accurately weigh the limitations contained in the proclamation authorizing the sale of land. They assert, moreover, that they have been encouraged by high authority to sell this very land, which up to January last it was universally understood was to be confiscated. Speculators, encouraged to disregard the provisions of the law by the liberality with which all classes of land claimants have of late years been treated, are now in treaty with Natives for the purchase of land in all parts of the harbour frontage. Parts of Te Puna township, surveyed in acre sections at the expense of the Government; parts of the Otumatai Block and other lands partly surveyed, the most valuable spots in the harbour, which must necessarily be the keys of any settlement, are now under negotiation and in course of private survey. If such proceedings are allowed to go on, it is impossible that either the settlement or the Natives should prosper. It will clearly be impossible to settle one of the Waikato regiments if the only lands suitable for their location are suffered to pass into the hands of speculators.

Without the support of a large and fixed population, the safety of outlying settlers cannot be assured, and the back lands will be left unoccupied as at present; the Natives will in the aggregate receive far less money for their lands than they would if the front were occupied by the Government, and the advantages will be confined to a few instead of being distributed over the whole tribe; and they will neither have the inducements to peace nor the protection from aggression which they would derive from a strong settlement in this position, so central and commanding for the Natives of the East Coast, the Lakes, and the Upper Thames Valley.

The difficulties in the way of a satisfactory settlement of these questions are, I admit, now very great; but they increase by every day's delay, and settled they must be in some way, for the present uncertainty is a crying injustice to the Natives as well as a heavy loss to the Colony.

Under the operation of this uncertainty the Natives are abstaining from cultivating beyond what is necessary to supply their immediate wants, and are deterred from entering into any settled course of life, while they are distracted between the importunate and tempting offers of speculative land-buyers, and the assurances of others that such sales are illegal.

In addition to these evils to the Natives, the opportunity is passing away of locating a regiment on one of the few spots where its settlement would be a great success to the Military Settlers themselves, and where it would effect the object of the scheme by affording the best of guarantees for the peace of the district.

The Hon. the Minister for Colonial Defence, &c.

I have, &c.,

THEOPH. HEALE.

No. 9.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. CLARKE to Mr. MACKAY.

(D. 41.)

Civil Commissioner's Office,

SIR,—

Tauranga, 5th June, 1865.

I have the honor to enclose for your information copies of two Native letters—one from Te Hira, of the Thames, and the other from Patara, Kereopa's colleague in promulgating the Paimarire superstition on the East Coast.

Both letters are to the chiefs of the Ngaiterangi tribe.

I have, &c.,

H. T. CLARKE,

Civil Commissioner.

The Civil Commissioner, Auckland.