

# R E P O R T

BY

MR. G. S. COOPER

ON THE SUBJECT OF

RESERVES, NATIVE LANDS, ETC., IN THE PROVINCE  
OF HAWKE'S BAY.

*(In Continuation of Papers presented on the 20th August, 1867.)*

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PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY COMMAND  
OF HIS EXCELLENCY.

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WELLINGTON.

1867.



## REPORT BY MR. COOPER ON RESERVES, NATIVE LANDS, ETC., HAWKE'S BAY.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. COOPER to the Hon. J. C. RICHMOND.

SIR,—

Napier, 26th August, 1867.

In compliance with instructions left with me by Mr. Rolleston on the occasion of his visit to Napier, I have the honor to enclose a skeleton map of this Province showing the main features of the country; the land remaining to the Natives, as distinguished from what they have sold to the Crown; the Native reserves in alienated blocks; the principal villages, and the main lines of road in the Province.

With regard to the reserves I have to report that, as will be seen from the map, they form but a small percentage of the area sold.

The Makahua Reserve (No. 5 on map), half of Pakowhai (No. 7), one section of 200 acres, eleven of 100 acres each, and one of fifty acres at Tikokino (Nos. 13 and 14) and Rangaika (No. 19), are the only portions of the reserves which are granted, or promised to be granted to individuals for their separate use.

The only land which was given back to the Natives after their title had been extinguished, and for the general use, instead of to individuals, was a block of 700 acres at Tikokino (No. 14 on map). Of this quantity 300 acres were promised at the time of purchase, and appear in the deed as a condition of sale. The remaining 400 acres were afterwards added by Governor Gore Browne, on its being represented to His Excellency that the original acreage was insufficient to maintain the population.

All the other reserves shown on the map come under subsection 2 of section 3 of "The Native Lands Act, 1866."

Of these the Natives have sold absolutely to the Government Manukaroa (No. 6), Tukuwaru (No. 11), Puketitiri (No. 23), and Kohenuakau (No. 18), and part of Pourerere (No. 8); and they have sold absolutely to private individuals Waipukurau (No. 9), Rangaika (No. 19), Awanga (No. 21), and Roro o Kuri (No. 22). Those that remain to them are let, I believe without exception, to European tenants at fair rents, and for periods not in any case exceeding twenty-one years.

Unfortunately for the rising generation many of these reserves were passed through the Native Lands Court prior to the 8th of October last, and so have missed coming under "The Native Lands Act, 1866." To show how much this is to be regretted, and what a misfortune it would have been had all the reserves remained alienable, it is only necessary to say that in the case of almost every alienable reserve yet unsold, negotiations are in progress for its sale, and these are being prosecuted with vigour the greater in proportion to the paucity of other land owned by the grantees. This is easily intelligible: a man who owns large tracts of land from which he derives a revenue more or less capable of supporting him in the habits of luxury and idleness to which the Asiatic temperament of the Maori naturally inclines him, feels but little temptation to part with the small pieces which, from being in the heart of settlement, have acquired an exceptional value; whereas another who, perhaps, has sold nearly every acre he possessed, and sometimes a bit of his neighbour's as well, is easily tempted to let his valuable reserve go at a price far beyond his wildest dreams of ten years ago, which will nevertheless not only leave him a pauper in a country where parish rates and unions are as yet unknown, but will turn his offspring into a race of thieves and vagabonds on the face of the earth.

I most earnestly trust, therefore, that His Excellency's Government will not relax in any case the wise and salutary restrictions upon the alienability of reserves in this Province which are imposed by the Act of 1866.

There are no reserves or grants of land in the Province for religious or charitable purposes.

There is one estate of 7397 acres granted as an educational endowment. This estate is comprised in three grants of contiguous properties, of which two were ceded by the Maoris to the Crown under the provisions of "The Native Reserves Act, 1856," and the third is a free gift of Crown Lands promised by Sir George Grey, and granted by Colonel Gore Browne. These grants are made in favour of the Bishop of New Zealand, who has conveyed them to trustees appointed by the General Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in New Zealand. As the trust upon which the land given by the Maoris is granted differs from that affecting the free gift from the Crown, I have extracted from the grants the words describing the trusts, which are as follow, the first two being in relation to the lands granted by the Maoris, and the third to that granted by the Crown:—

(1.) Grant, dated 10th June, 1857, 1745 acres, to George Augustus, Bishop of New Zealand, and his successors, "upon trust as an endowment for a school to be maintained at Te Aute, in the District of Ahuriri aforesaid, for the benefit of the aboriginal inhabitants of New Zealand."

(2.) Grant, same date, 1408 acres, same trust.

(3.) Grant, dated 7th July, 1857, 4244 acres, same grantee, "upon trust as an endowment for a school to be maintained in the District of Ahuriri aforesaid for the education of children of our subjects of both races in New Zealand."

Thus the first two deeds grant 3153 acres to endow a school "at Te Aute," for "the benefit," which may be educational or pecuniary, of the "aboriginal inhabitants," not of the district where the land lies, but "of New Zealand;" while the third deed grants 4244 acres, by far the most valuable part of the property, to endow a school, not at Te Aute, but anywhere "in the District of Ahuriri aforesaid," which district is undefined, "for the education of children of our subjects of both races in New Zealand."

Thus, of 7397 acres lying almost in one block, 3153 acres are to be applied to one trust, and 4244 acres to another quite distinct.

No steps have been taken as yet to fulfil either of the trusts under which this valuable estate is held.

Of this failure, however, I am bound to say that the blame does not attach to the Bishop, to the present trustees, or to the incumbent and manager of the estate, the Rev. Samuel Williams, but rather to the want of auxiliary funds to develop the resources of the property; and partly, and as many people think, mainly to the change which has taken place amongst the Maoris themselves, and which would incline them to any system of education rather than one associated with any particular religious denomination, or, perhaps, I should say, with any religious element at all.

The system on which the estate has been managed has been that of endeavouring to bring it so soon as possible into a state of solvency, in the hope of being able subsequently to make enough by farming the property, to erect the necessary buildings, and carry on a school.

To carry out this view, Mr. Williams, to whose uncontrolled management the estate has been hitherto committed, has spared neither time nor trouble, and has not only given his own practical experience, but has advanced a considerable sum of money, which, I believe, has not yet been wholly refunded to him.

The result of it all has been that an excellent farm and cattle station has been established, but simply nothing whatever has been done towards carrying out the original idea or ideas with which the land was made over to the head of a religious sect.

If I might make a suggestion, I would recommend that a Commissioner should be appointed to examine and report upon the value of the property, the amount of incumbrances with which it is burdened, and the best means of relieving it; and also to suggest in what way the present trusts may be amended so as to ensure the establishment of a good common Grammar School, at which the youth of both races indifferently might receive a sound education at as small a cost as possible; and I have no doubt that this might be accomplished at an expense not far exceeding that of the board of the pupils, as I do not think the present annual value of the estate is less than one thousand pounds.

Such an institution, were it in working order, and judiciously conducted under experienced management, would be gladly and extensively taken advantage of by parents of both races, and would supply a want which is daily becoming more felt.

I regret that so great a delay has taken place in forwarding this Report. It has arisen from the pressure of work upon the Provincial Land Office, arising chiefly from the plans for the Native Lands Court which had to be examined and passed, and which, with other matters, delayed the completion of the map until now.

I have, &c.,  
G. S. COOPER,  
Resident Magistrate.

The Native Secretary, &c., Wellington.

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