

expenditure, and I do not anticipate, when matters get fairly into working order, that the incidental expenses, together with the cost of management, will exceed ten per cent on the net income.

"The remainder of the Reserves in the County of Westland are included under Class B. 1, and consist of 2,100 acres set apart in 1860 for individual occupation and allotment; these lands are situated chiefly at the mouth of the principal rivers on the West Coast, and are scattered at intervals along the whole line of coast from Hokitika to Jackson's Bay. With the exception of a small portion in use by the Natives, these Reserves are unproductive, and for the present are likely to remain so, until the districts in which they are situated become peopled, and a demand arises for land."

Mr. Greenwood writes:—"With regard to the Hokitika Reserves on south bank of the river, the whole of the front allotments are let, chiefly in small allotments at a good rental. The part lying back from the river is let in larger blocks to persons who have taken them with a view to gold mining on an extended scale, with the aid of machinery, water wheels, &c. Operations have been carried on for over three years without any remunerative results hitherto, but the result of borings lately made has encouraged the tenants to endeavor to increase their capital, and get steam machinery on to the ground. I have heard nothing of their progress for the last two months.

"The immense quantity of 'tailings' shot into the river a little higher up, at the Kanieri, on the opposite side, appears to have caused a strong set of the current against the opposite bank, and damage is done to the river frontage of the Reserves in consequence. Whether it is possible to stay the mischief by protective works is, of course, a question for an engineer, my own belief is that the task would be too costly to make it worth while.

"The reduction of the rent of some of the frontages to the business part of Greymouth streets, was made by Mr. Mackay, as I understand to equalize the rent paid by those on the upper part of the Mawhera quay with that which others were paying a little further down for premises quite as valuable.

"The rent previously paid was certainly excessive."

Independently of the great value attaching to many of the Reserves from the discovery of gold deposits in their vicinity, the land is, from its position and fertility, of great worth. The Native estate is quite equal in value, town for town, and farm for farm, to the crown lands of the County.

In 1846, the Natives of the West Coast were about seventy in number, and, of all the tribes in New Zealand, had benefited least by the coming of Europeans to the country.

Ships had never frequented the coast, and the Dusky Bay sealers who, forty years ago, had occasionally pushed a boat through the surf at the Teremakau or the Mawhera, had then long since disappeared. When Mr. Brunner and myself walked from Nelson to Arahura, in 1846, we found the Natives at the latter place without either pigs or goats. Potatoes they had, but neither melons, cabbage, pumpkins or maize. Their clothing was the coarse Native *koka*, and the dog skin, and they were almost destitute of iron implements for cooking purposes, or for clearing the bush. Of boats or sea-going canoes they had none, and dreading to be seen by the northern natives, they lived in the remote Arahura country, partly from the security it afforded, and partly to work the greenstone which was to be found in the river bed. But, poor as their condition was, they were hospitable almost to improvidence, towards their white visitors. Beyond seeking to obtain an iron pot or an axe in exchange for a *meri pounamu*, their life appeared to be without aim or purpose. They now derive a rental of nearly £4000* a year from white tenants. They have weatherboarded cottages with chimneys and glass windows, and their children are educated in English schools.

It may be without the limits of a Report on Reserves to touch upon circumstances of this nature, but when it has been so often written in England that the Maori suffers materially and socially by contact with the settler, it is but proper, I think, to show that even in the midst of a gold digging community—proverbially rough, and not disposed to regard a dark skin with much sentiment—the Maori has improved in social condition, and is well cared for.

In order to construct and maintain roads through and about the Native Reserves, the County Government ask for a contribution of 20 per cent. of the gross rentals of the first year and 8 per cent. in the form of an income tax on the succeeding years rents, together with the ordinary assessment of the tenants. The following resolution was passed by the County Council:—"That in the opinion of this Council it is desirable that representations be made to both houses of Legislature to pass an Act to cause Native property to contribute its just and equitable share towards the construction of roads, wharves, and protective works, &c., through or adjoining Native property; and that the Council considers that twenty per cent from the gross rent the first year, (when leased) and eight per cent every succeeding year, for maintenance, is a fair proportion for contribution."

It is difficult to understand on what principle the Native lands should thus be taxed twice for the construction of roads. That the leaseholds should be liable to assessment like any other occupied ground is reasonable, and in certain other cases where, by the construction of adjacent public works, such land had derived an enhanced value, it might be reasonable to expect it to contribute for a time, even if unoccupied, but beyond this I am unable to recognise a liability. The claim is founded on the argument that, inasmuch as that the Reserves never contributed anything towards the land fund, from which money for the construction of public works was obtained, therefore the land should bear an exceptional tax.

The argument, however, does not seem to be perfect. A land fund is really the profit accruing from selling at a high rate lands bought from the Natives at a low rate. It is a legitimate means for obtaining an end, but it does not follow that lands never purchased should be affected by the practice. A land fund is available for the introduction and settlement of immigrants, the purchase of other lands, and the opening up of the country. It can scarcely be expected that purely Native lands should be made to contribute to these purposes; and the Reserves on the West Coast, although under the management of the Government, are as much the property of the Natives as the unpurchased country of Taupo or the Urewera. The County Government also ask for the contribution of £250 towards making a new line of road up the Arahura Valley and along the southern boundaries of sections 38, 39, and 40. This line of road appears to be necessary in order to avoid the low levels subject to