

bare sufficiency for their own wants. The same cause that has tended to retard this pursuit amongst the European settlers of late years, the decline in the value of produce, has also operated amongst the Natives. The discovery of gold has also had the effect of causing many to completely abandon the cultivation of their land, to follow the pursuit of gold-digging, at which some have been very successful; but as a rule their earnings have been mostly squandered in a useless manner, and the result, with a few exceptions, has been the increase of indolent and improvident habits amongst them. They own comparatively very few horses and cattle, and the breeding of pigs, which used to occupy their attention in former years, has fallen into disuse, excepting in a few localities, chiefly in consequence of their having no room to run them, owing to the gradual settlement of the country by the European population. The same reason will also prevent them from owning any number of sheep.

Since the sale of the bulk of their lands to the Crown, the Natives have been mostly confined to their reserves, which, although large in the aggregate for the number of persons to whom they belong, are small in comparison to the extent of land owned by them in former years, over which they could hunt or fish without hindrance or the fear of transgressing some unknown law; now they can hardly keep an animal about them, without its becoming a source of anxiety, lest it involve them in some trouble with their European neighbours. The increase of civilization around them, besides curtailing their liberties, has also compelled the adoption of a different, and to them a more expensive mode of life, which, owing to their improvident habits, they find very difficult to maintain.

All this is very perplexing and bewildering to the Maori, whose early habits and mode of life were so different to ours, and it is not surprising that, perceiving his incapacity to keep pace with his European neighbours, a want of earnestness should predominate all he undertakes. The quantity of land set apart for the Natives is ample, if they would only put it to good use; but in many instances they prefer letting, in place of cultivating it. This practice is not objectionable when they have plenty of land to spare for the purpose, and the rent receivable is commensurate with its value. At Motueka, the Natives, who occupy a portion of the Trust Estate, derive an income from letting their surplus land, of £240 per annum—this amount is independent of rent accruing from land in the occupation of tenants under the Trust. The Natives of Queen Charlotte's Sound and the Wairau also receive an income of £100 per annum from rents.

The total area of Native reserves in the Province of Nelson is, 58,565 acres 3 roods and 35 perches; and in the Province of Marlborough, 21,414 acres 2 roods 8 perches. The reserves in Westland comprise an area of 5,937 acres 1 rood 16 perches. As a brief sketch of the origination and management of the Native reserves in the South Island may not be uninteresting, I subjoin a memorandum on the subject, together with a return showing the total acreage set apart for Native purposes.

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Native Commissioner.

MEMORANDUM ON THE ORIGATION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATIVE RESERVES IN THE SOUTHERN ISLAND.

THE system of making Native reserves originated with the New Zealand Company, and in the instructions to its principal agent, Colonel Wakefield, who was intrusted with the purchase of land for the Company, one of the principles laid down was, that in every purchase a portion of the territory ceded, equal to one-tenth of the whole, should be reserved, and held in trust by the Company for the future benefit of the chief families of the ceding tribe. It was considered advisable to adopt this course in preference to making reserves for the Native owners in large blocks, as had been the common practice in regard to Indian reserves in North America, as that plan tended to impede settlement, and to encourage the aborigines to continue in a state of barbarism. The Company, therefore, directed that the reserves for the Natives should be set apart in the same way, in the same allotments, and in the same effectual manner as if the reserved lands had been purchased from the Company on behalf of the Natives. Accordingly, in pursuance with this intention, when the preliminary sales of land in the first settlements were held, the Company reserved one-tenth of the land orders for the chief families of the tribe by whom the land was originally sold, in the same way precisely, as if the lots had been purchased on their behalf; and the priority of choice for the Native allotments was determined by lot, as in the case of actual purchasers, the selection being made by an officer expressly charged with that duty.

These reserves of land were looked on as far more important to the Natives than anything that could be paid to them in the shape of purchase-money, as, however high they were paid, the consideration given would only afford but a brief enjoyment, and, when it had passed away, the recipients be but little better for the gift, while these lands would remain with them as a lasting possession.

By way of a recompense for the moment, as well as in deference to public opinion, the Company, however, paid the Natives what was deemed, according to received notions, to be a sufficient price; but they considered the real worth of the land purchased from them to be the reserves set apart for their maintenance, and for schools, hospitals, and other useful establishments.

It was to guard the Natives against that common failing of all aboriginal races—want of foresight, and to secure them from the dangers to which colonization exposed them, if denuded of all landed property, that the Company invented the plan of Native reserves, as these were possessions that could