

1873.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONER OF NATIVE RESERVES.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

PROVINCE OF WELLINGTON.

DURING the interval between the date of Mr. Swainson's retirement from the Commissionership of Native Reserves in 1867, and my location in Wellington, last year, several disputes had arisen amongst the Port Nicholson Natives interested in the Reserves made by the New Zealand Company, and by Colonel McCleverty. These disputes* which chiefly related to the appropriation of rents have been settled in the following manner, viz. :—

Section 12, Ohariu.—The rent paid by Mr. France, £14 14s. a year, is to be divided equally between Paiura, Meti Kingi Paetahi, and Paratene.

Section 13, Ohariu.—Paratene is to have 25½ acres for subsistence land, and Meti Kingi to have 11 acres.

Sections IV. and V., Porirua.—The dividing boundary of these reserves has been adjusted by survey. By this, 71 acres 1 rood 20 perches, on the northern side of Section V., becomes apportioned to Raiha Horomona.

The Reserve No. 84, in the Hutt Valley, has, in conformity with a purchasing clause in the lease been sold to Mr. P. Cotter, for £1,000. This land was purchased in 1855 by Sir George Grey, with public money, in order to supplement the reserves of the Ngatitama people of Kai-warra-warra, who, have since, by instalments, repaid the money.

The purchase money was handed by Mr. Cotter to Wi Tamehana, Ihaia, and Taituha—T. E. Williams, Esq., being nominated to divide the money amongst the claimants.

The reserves at Makara, Nos. 22 and 24, comprising 200 acres, were, in 1862, let by two chiefs of the Ngatitama to a tenant, for a term of twenty-one years, on a yearly rental of £30.

The title of the lessors did not appear to be clearly established, and the case was complicated by one of them having died intestate, and the other having disappeared from the district, and gone, it was alleged, into rebellion. The tenant, under the circumstances, withheld payment of the rent.

At a meeting convened here on the 7th August last, of all the Natives interested in the land, it was decided that Harata, widow of Wi Pakata, one of the original lessors, should receive £10 a year; Paratene Te Wheoro £5, and Rei Te Wharau £5, yearly; and that, on due payment of arrears, the lease should be suffered to run its term.

The town sections at Te Aro, Nos. 1081 and 1082, have been let by public tender to Mr. Charles Swiney, for twenty-one years, from 11th October, 1872, at £2 2s. a year, the tenant to fence in within twelve months. These reserves lie at the extreme southern end of the town, as surveyed.

The Governor has consented to the sales of the following reserves (grants with limitations under Native Lands Acts), viz. :—

Taumata Whakapono, West, No. 89N, containing 944 acres, at Wairarapa, from Wi Tinitara Te Kaewa, to James Gilligan, for £300.

Te Aro Pa, Wellington, Sections 1, 2, and 7, comprising 24 perches, from Hemi Parai to His Honor the Superintendent of Wellington, for £270.

Te Aro Pa, Section 8, containing 20 perches, from Hemi Parai and Hori Ngapaka, to the Superintendent, for £70.

The Wellington and Masterton Railroad is surveyed through a number of Native Reserves, chiefly those awarded by Colonel McCleverty. Some difficulty was experienced in causing the Native owners to comprehend a measure of compulsory land surrender for purposes of public works. Ultimately the sum of £55 an acre was agreed to between the valuers and the owners, as the rate to be paid for land in Sections Nos. 1, 2, 3, 16, and 20, Pitoni. The area required was 11 acres 1 rood 39 perches, and the payment £632 3s. 2d.

It was desirable that this sum should be invested in the purchase of other land for the benefit of the Natives; but as the occupants of the land taken showed damage to actual cultivations, loss of crop, and dispersion of stock, and as the Government, in the case of a McCleverty reserve, had no controlling power, the money was given without restriction to the Natives.

* I have stated the mode of settlement of these disputes minutely, as there are Natives interested, indirectly, in the reserves, who reside outside of the immediate district, and whose only means of becoming accurately informed on the subject will be by the official report.