

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONER OF NATIVE RESERVES.

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

PROVINCE OF AUCKLAND.

THE tenant of the lower part of lot 4, section 12, in Mechanic's Bay, having become insolvent, has given up his occupation. The sea-wall built by the Harbour Commissioners has entirely cut off the water frontage of this reserve, and materially injured it. The tenant had taken it for a timber yard, but it has become unfit for such a purpose.

At Onehunga, the tenant of sub-section 8 of lot 11, section 20, has also given up occupation. The completion of the railroad to the new wharf has to some extent transferred business from the vicinity of the old wharf where this reserve is situated. I have, however, succeeded in re-letting a part of this land to Mr. Sims, on yearly occupation, at a rent of £3 10s. a year.

The land at Blackett's Point, lot 89 of suburban section 1, has been surveyed into six lots of about an acre each, and offered for lease by public auction. The following lots have been let:—

- Sub-division No. 1, containing 1 acre, for 21 years, at £5 a year, to Mr. —.
- „ No. 2, containing 1 acre, for 21 years, at £3, to Mr. —.
- „ No. 3, containing 1 acre, for 21 years, at £4, to Mr. —.
- „ No. 4, containing 1 acre, for 21 years, at £5, to Mr. —.
- „ No. 5, containing 1 acre, for 21 years, at £4, to Mr. —.
- „ No. 6, containing 3 roods 20 perches, for 21 years, at £3.

In all, £24 a year, against £13 a year, recent rent.

Lower part of No. 4, section 12, Mechanic's Bay, has been re-let for £12 a year, for 21 years. An iron tank has been purchased for the hostelry, Mechanic's Bay, for the sum of £4 5s.

At Onehunga a custodian has been placed in charge of the storehouse and hostelry. The Waikatos are again making use of this place, that had been unused by them since the commencement of the Waikato war. The sum of £6 3s. 6d. has been expended in materials and building of a chimney to this hostelry.

At Coromandel the chief Makuare te Pukeroa applied to be allowed to substitute a larger and more valuable piece of land for Parangau No. 13, containing 29 perches. By an inadvertence he had allowed this land to be reserved for him while it was under contract for sale to Mr. John Lynch, who has built a house upon it. I personally examined the piece offered, and found it was of larger area (1 rood 23 perches) and more valuable, being at the actual landing-place, and in use as a timber yard. The exchange was therefore allowed, and the substituted land placed with Mr. Keddel, R.M., and myself, in trust for Makuare and his heirs. The tenancy of the Maungatapu estate at the Piako, containing 6,110 acres, has been transferred from T. B. Gillies, Esq., to W. A. Murray, Esq.

Waiuku.

The lands granted in 1866–67 to the loyal Natives of Waiuku, under “The Friendly Natives Contracts Confirmation Act, 1866,” have been cause of much trouble to the Natives beneficially interested. They comprise upwards of 3,749 acres, and were conveyed in trust to certain chiefs for themselves and their tribes or hapus.

The chiefs contracted for the actual sale of some of these reserves, and let others in an irregular manner. Instead of dividing the rent derived amongst those legally entitled to receive it, it is asserted that they have kept it for their own purposes; certainly they have rendered no accounts. They have also sold the valuable timber, to the material injury of the land, and the lesser claimants complain that this is done without their concurrence or participation.

Various propositions have from time to time been made to the Natives to adjust these matters, but although the Native trustees are willing to rid themselves of the trouble of management, they have hitherto declined to accede to any arrangement that did not leave to them such a share of the profits as was incompatible with the rights of the lesser claimants.

I visited Waiuku in May, and met Paora te Iwi, Wiremu Tauroa, and other Natives of influence. After an exhaustive discussion of their position in relation to the reserves, I proposed that the most fertile and valuable of the reserves—Tahurangi—of 1,700 acres, should be cut up into conveniently sized sections for each family or individual (as might be required), and allocated to them by an officer of the Government. The trust grants should then be surrendered, and grants, with limitations on sale,