

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE RESERVES, MIDDLE ISLAND.

(REPORT BY MR. ALEX. MACKAY.)

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

SIR,—

Native Reserves Office, Nelson, 18th July, 1874.

I have the honor to forward herewith Returns of the Receipts and Expenditure of both the Nelson and Greymouth Native Reserve Funds for the financial year ended 30th June last.

The aggregate sum collected from various sources on account of the Nelson Fund during the above-named period, added to the balance in hand on the 1st July, 1873, computes a total of £1,794 16s. 1d., while the expenditure for the same period was £1,757 5s. 1d., leaving a balance to the credit of the fund of £37 11s. Out of the sum expended, £809 16s. 7d. has been spent in various ways for the behoof of the Natives having a beneficial interest in the estate; £343 5s. 2d. for purposes in connection with its administration; £504 3s. 4d. for salaries; and £100 towards the construction of a school for the Natives of the Wairau.

The sale of Section 205, in the Town of Nelson, to the Provincial Government for a site for a public school, authorized by your letter, No. 718, of the 4th October last, has been effected for the sum of £200, and the amount paid to the credit of the fund pending a favourable investment.

The amount of income collected on account of rents payable to the Greymouth Fund during the past year was £3,960 2s. 7d., and £189 was realized from the sale of land in the Upper Grey, making a total of £4,149 2s. 7d.; this added to the sum of £4,562 0s. 11d. on hand from last year, augments the amount to £8,711 3s. 6d. The expenditure to the 30th ultimo amounts to £3,800 14s. 1d., leaving a balance of £4,910 9s. 5d. in hand. Of the amount expended, £2,929 2s. 2d. was spent on behalf of the Natives, £592 8s. 7d. for expenses in connection with the estate, and £279 3s. 4d. for salaries. Out of the first-mentioned item, £500 was expended as authorized by your letter, No. 619, of 5th September last, in the purchase of 1,000 acres in the Upper Arahura, at the instance of the Natives, who were desirous to acquire the land for the sake of old associations, as it is supposed by them to contain the remains of the mythical canoe that originally conveyed the Pounama to the West Coast; £142 was also spent for the erection of a school and master's house at Arahura; and £252 for breakwater to protect the property there from the encroachment of the river. The necessity for this expenditure was reported on, under date 20th August last, and subsequently authorized. It was supposed at the time that three wing-dams would be sufficient to protect the banks, but since the breakwaters have been erected the necessity for another is evident, and the District Engineer has recommended that a fourth should be added to make the work complete. Considerable damage has been done to the banks of the river in other parts of the property by the heavy flood that occurred in April last. The main road to Christchurch, through the reserve, has been destroyed to such an extent that the provincial authorities decline to make any further expenditure on it, without the present damage is repaired at the expense of the Native Reserve Fund. According to an estimate made by the Provincial Engineer, the expenditure of a sum of £560 would be necessary to effect this object and to protect the river banks; and even that amount may be found inadequate.

The Natives who own the land have expressed their assent to a reasonable expenditure being incurred to protect the property from further inroads, and I would beg to recommend that an arrangement should be made with the Provincial Government, after a properly organized plan has been decided on for carrying out the work, to have it put in hand before the summer floods take place.

With a view to facilitate the examination and identification of the various items comprised in the totals of expenditure in the aforesaid returns, I have prepared detailed statements for the purposes of audit, showing the manner in which the expenditure has been classified, as well as the date and numbers of the vouchers, which make up the several totals.

I have, &c.,

ALEXANDER MACKAY,

Commissioner.

The Under Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.