

1888.
NEW ZEALAND.

MIDDLE ISLAND NATIVE LAND QUESTION

(REPORT ON), BY MR. COMMISSIONER MACKAY.

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

Mr. A. MACKAY to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Temuka, 5th May, 1887.

I have the honour to transmit herewith my report on the Middle Island question referred to me under Royal Commission, dated the 12th May, 1886, and beg respectfully to request that the same may be laid before His Excellency the Governor, to whom it is addressed.

The importance of the matter has compelled me to go to some length in dealing with it, for the purpose of placing the whole question in an intelligible shape to enable it to be fully comprehended, and all the obligations, whether legally or morally binding on the Government, to be fulfilled in the fullest and fairest manner.

The whole of the land purchases in the southern provinces have been dealt with in my report, and the recommendations made in regard to the Ngaitahu and Murihiku purchases are of a twofold character.

(a.) That blocks of land should be set apart as an endowment to provide an independent fund for the promotion of the objects which were held out to the Natives as an inducement to part with their land. A fund of this kind would possess manifold advantages, one of the chief being that the moneys accruing for the purpose would be derived from a permanent and independent source, removed from the ever-varying influence of Parliament, or other causes which have hitherto interfered with an equitable fulfilment of the claims of the southern Natives.

The following objects are some of the purposes for which the moneys could be expended: (1) The erection and maintenance of schoolhouses and other buildings for general purposes; (2) the fencing, improving, and drainage of land; (3) the purchase of implements of husbandry; (4) medical aid and medicines; (5) schoolmasters' salaries; (6) purchase of books and other school-requisites; (7) contribution to local rates; (8) the purchase of food and clothing for destitute and decrepit Natives; (9) and generally for any other purposes that would tend to promote the social and moral welfare of the Natives.

(b.) That blocks of land be set apart for the use and occupation of the Natives to an extent that would augment the quantity owned by each man, woman, and child to fifty acres per head.

Under those heads the following quantities have been recommended in the under-mentioned blocks, namely:—

Ngaitahu Purchase.—(1) Endowment purposes, 100,000 acres; (2) individual use and occupation, in addition to the quantity already reserved, 30,700 acres: total, 130,700 acres.

Murihiku Purchase.—(1) Endowment purposes, 40,000 acres; (2) individual use and occupation, in addition to the quantity already reserved, 15,412 acres: total, 55,412 acres.

Being a gross total of 186,112 acres for all purposes in both blocks.

The Akaroa purchases are included in the Ngaitahu Block.

I have not made any recommendation in respect of the Otakou Block, but have furnished full particulars touching the acquisition of the land and the obligations pertaining to it, which will serve as a basis of operation for future action.

I have been unable to fully complete the whole of the duties devolving on me under the Commission as regards—(1) The selection of the land; (2) the ascertainment of the names, &c., on whose behalf provision of land should be made.

As regards the first matter, the Survey Department possesses the best facilities for this part of the work, and I would beg to recommend that it be asked to perform the duty. With reference to the second, the actual position of the matter as regards individual acreage cannot be finally determined until the whole of the Court-work is completed, and the records of acreage—allotted individually—are made up for each settlement.

Under the proposition made by me touching the land to be set apart for endowment purposes, there is nothing to prevent some of the best pastoral or agricultural land being appropriated for it, as existing rights will not be interfered with, nor will the settlement of the country be impeded, as it will still, notwithstanding the dedication to other uses, remain under the control of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, to be treated precisely in the same manner as other waste lands, the only difference being that the revenue accruing would have to be paid to a separate account.