

north of Auckland, and 402,000 acres in Hawke's Bay. By a return made to an order of the House of Representatives in 1861 (E.—10), the average price paid by Government for land in the North Island appears to exceed 6d. an acre. In 1849 the Government endeavoured to negotiate the purchase of over a million of acres in the Wairarapa for £1,000. The Native owners demanded £16,000, but this was considered excessive, and the attempt was abandoned.

Land-purchase operations were not resumed again in the district until 1853. From that year up to the 30th June, 1860, the Natives alienated about 957,864 acres to the Crown, receiving during that period about £38,642 for the area sold. Reserves to the extent of 20,234 acres had been made for their use out of the alienated lands, and 187,856 acres remained in their hands at their absolute disposal. In addition to this they were entitled to receive 5 per cent. on the re-sale, after deducting cost of surveys on 387,000 acres. This is another instance where the price of the land in its wild state had been enhanced by the settlement of the country.

It has already been pointed out that the Natives in the southern province of the Middle Island never had the opportunity of benefiting in this way, as it was deemed advisable for colonisation purposes to acquire all their wilderness land from them at one time; and for this reason greater consideration to protect their welfare should have been shown by reserving a sufficiency of land for all purposes, both for their use and occupation, as well as for endowments to promote their social advancement.

The total area included within the boundaries of Kemp's Purchase, according to recent computation, inclusive of Banks Peninsula, which, although excluded in 1848, was treated subsequently as if it had formed part of the block, amounts to 20,128,000 acres, and has been classified to contain the under-mentioned areas of good, medium, and inferior land at the time it was purchased. The classification has been determined according to position, value, and accessibility in 1848. The first class comprises the country that was fairly accessible at that date. The second, the interior of the country available for pastoral purposes, and accessible to travellers on foot and horseback. The third, the rugged and mountainous country, inclusive of the West Coast, then a *terra incognita*, in which state it remained until opened up by the gold discoveries about 1863. The area of the first class is estimated at 2,864,000 acres, the second class at 8,064,000 acres, and the third class at 9,200,000. Assuming that 3d. an acre was the nominal consideration value of the first class in 1848, 1½d. an acre for the second, and 1d. for the third, the total value would amount to £124,533; and, treating this as a landed estate to be handed over to the vendors, the minimum price of waste lands in the possession of the Crown at that time being £1 per acre, it would represent 124,533 acres. Of this, the parties interested have received up to the present time 19,312 acres, leaving a balance of 105,221 acres to be appropriated to their use.

Of this quantity I would recommend that 100,000 acres be set apart as an endowment to provide for purposes in connection with the promotion of their welfare, but, as the residue will be inadequate to make sufficient provision for the extent of land requisite for their use and occupation, I therefore beg to recommend that an additional quantity to the extent of 25,479 acres be added for the purpose of increasing the individual acreage to fifty acres each for all who are entitled to be provided for within the block. This will require a total acreage of 130,700 acres to be appropriated for the purpose.

As evidence that the quantity recommended is not unreasonable when all the circumstances in connection with the purchase are fully considered, had the original intention been given effect to at the time in a liberal manner—*i.e.*, to set apart ample reserves for the present and future wants of the Natives in the fullest sense of the term, as well as to make the only secure provision by an endowment in land for the purpose of promoting the social and physical welfare of the Natives—land to the extent of 150 acres per individual would probably not have been deemed excessive as a just remuneration for ceding a vast estate for a trifling payment. The persons for whom the reserves were made in 1848 numbered 637, but there were others who were interested in the block for whom provision should have been made who were not included in the census partly through the folly of the Natives in not furnishing the necessary information, as well as through their not fully realising the importance the non-fulfilment of this duty would have on their future welfare. There were Natives absent in the North Island at the time, others living on Banks Peninsula, as well as at the settlements at Otago, Taieri, and Molyneux, who were interested in the block, and should have had land reserved for them either at the time or afterwards, had their requirements been made known. Besides the Natives residing at Port Levy, who were included in the Kaiapoi census, there were about a hundred and fifty others on the Peninsula entitled to consideration; it was known also that a number were omitted in the census taken at the several settlements. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to assume that the number to be provided for, had a full enumeration been made, would have computed one thousand. An allotment of 150 acres each for this number would make a total of 150,000 acres for all purposes, 50,000 acres of which should have been allocated for their use and occupation, and 100,000 acres for an endowment for the purposes before enumerated.

If this had been done the vendors would have had no cause to complain that their interests had been overlooked. Assuming it cannot be gainsayed that 150,000 acres would have been a fair quantity to have set apart to meet all the requirements of the Natives if the aggregate area already reserved is deducted, the balance will represent within a few acres the quantity, *viz.*, 130,700 acres, now recommended to be appropriated for the purpose with a view to finally settle the question.

There is another phase of the matter that should not be overlooked in dealing with the question, and that is the difficulty of now securing lands of the same quality that was available for selection in former years at the time the territory was ceded by the Natives; and this alone should be a sufficient reason why a more extensive area should be set apart than perhaps might have been deemed necessary at that date. These remarks apply more particularly to the endowment for the production of a fund for Native purposes, as it would have been possible then to