

best suited for Native purposes could probably be obtained is the country on the sea-board between the Catlin's District and the Mataura, and to the west of the River Waiau in Foveaux Strait.

The Natives living at Riverton and at the settlements to the westward are very desirous to secure a block of land in the last-named locality; and I beg strongly to recommend that their wishes be given effect to. I have to report that the Natives interested in the fulfilment of the terms of the purchase are willing to accept a grant of land in satisfaction of their claims.

AKAROA BLOCK.

This block includes the whole of Banks Peninsula, estimated to contain 260,000 acres, inclusive of the portion formerly known as the Nanto Bordelaise Claim of 30,000 acres, and embraces three purchases, viz., the Port Cooper Purchase, effected in August, 1849, for £200; the Port Levy Purchase, in September, 1849, for £300; and Hamilton's Purchase, in December, 1856, for £200. The total quantity reserved for the Natives in all the purchases was 3,430 acres.

There does not appear to have been any enumeration made of the resident Natives at the time the purchases were effected. The first estimate of their numbers was made in 1844, when it was reckoned they computed 584. At that time a large number of the Natives belonging to settlements on the plains and elsewhere were living on the Peninsula, chiefly at Port Levy. The second estimate was made in 1848, when they were supposed to number 340. Of this number, 200 were apportioned land at Kaiapoi. The first detailed census taken was in 1861; at that date they numbered 211. The population according to the last census is 267; but as the whole of the Akaroa Block has been treated as a portion of Kemp's Purchase it is unnecessary to make any recommendation on their behalf.

OTAKOU BLOCK.

I propose to deal with this block separately, as the circumstances connected with its purchase stand alone. On the 31st July, 1844, the New Zealand Company—the Crown's right of pre-emption having been previously waived over 150,000 acres in the Middle Island by Governor Fitzroy in February of the same year, to enable the company to found the New Edinburgh Settlement—acquired, through the intervention of an officer appointed by the Colonial Government, a tract of country known as the Otakou Block, comprising 400,000 acres, for £2,400, as a site for the purpose, out of which the company engaged to select the 150,000 acres over which the right of pre-emption had been waived, and to re-convey the remainder to the Crown.

Three blocks of land were excepted out of the purchase by the Natives, namely, at Otago Heads, Taieri, and Te Karoro, containing in the aggregate land to the extent of 9,615 acres. The actual number of Natives resident in the block at the time does not appear to have been accurately ascertained, but according to an estimate made during the early part of the same year the population numbered about two hundred.

At the time the land was sold the tract of country between Otakou and the Taieri, according to Mr. Symonds, the officer appointed by the Government to effect the purchase from the Natives, was jointly claimed by the Native chiefs Tuhawaiki, Taiaroa, and Karetai, on behalf of their several families and dependants; and that the Taieri district to Tokota (the Nuggets) belonged to Tuhawaiki and his immediate connections. Independent of the land excepted from sale by the Natives, it was evidently intended at the time to select special reserves, as contemplated in the scheme of the other New Zealand Company's settlements, on which point Mr. Symonds writes as follows in his report on the purchase, dated the 2nd September, 1844: "I pursued this course as regard Native reserves from the firm conviction that the system heretofore adopted in the other purchases of large tracts was beyond the comprehension of the aborigines, and at the suggestion of Colonel Wakefield I left the further choice of reserves, namely, the tenth part of all land sold by the New Zealand Company, to be determined by His Excellency the Governor, without making any express stipulation with the Natives on the subject.

According to the agreement entered into between the New Zealand Company and the Otago Association in 1847 the New Edinburgh settlement was to comprise 144,600 acres, a tenth of which would represent 14,460 acres. The terms of purchase, however, between the company and the association precluded the possibility of any part of the aforesaid block being set apart as Native reserves; but the Natives nevertheless were to have land reserved for them within the block to the extent named; and ample evidence can be obtained by a perusal of the parliamentary papers and New Zealand Company's reports of that date of the intention to make such reserves, as the following extracts will show:—

Colonel Wakefield, in his report to the secretary of the Company on the acquisition of the Otakou Block, under date the 31st August, 1844, alludes to the matter in this wise: "Two other points there are of special application to the Governor: the one, respecting the future disposal of the residue of the block beyond the 150,000 acres to be selected by the Company; the other, as to the special Native reserves, as in the other settlements, not contemplated in the company's New Edinburgh scheme, which cannot be made till the surveys are completed and selections made."

Major Richmond, the Superintendent of New Munster, in his letter of the 23rd May, 1844, to Governor Fitzroy, reporting on Mr. Symonds's proceedings in relation to the Otakou Purchase, suggests that when the choice of sections is being made it will be necessary to have an officer on the spot to select reserves for the Government and Natives, and states his intention to appoint Mr. Symonds (unless previously instructed to the contrary) to make the selection. The matter is again alluded to by him in his letter to Governor Fitzroy, dated the 12th June, 1844. After detailing the steps taken in regard to Government reserves, he alludes in the following manner to the action he proposes to take in setting apart the Native reserves. "By the sixth paragraph of the prospectus for the New Edinburgh settlement I find that the provision hitherto made for the Natives by the directors of the New Zealand Company is left to the local Government. I shall therefore demand on their behalf one-tenth of each description of allotment, namely, town, suburban, and rural,