

Lands Department informs us that it cannot at present give us this requisite information. We may ask, How is section 11 to be carried out in the Rohepotae country? Is the area that was set aside for Maori occupation, or for sale or for lease, and that has become the Crown's property, to be deemed a sale under section 11? If not, are the Maoris to be bound to sell still more of their land so that its provisions may prove effective?

If it is said that the Maoris have large tracts of land unoccupied and unused, the following facts ought to be considered:—

- (a.) That land unoccupied in the European sense was, and still is used by the Maoris in some instances for hunting, as sanctuaries for birds, &c.:
- (b.) It cannot be expected that the Maori race without training can at once become expert farmers according to European methods:
- (c.) The State, having refused to recognise Maori titles in any Courts, and having compelled the Maoris to get grants or certificates from the Crown as their basis of title through the procedure of Native Land Courts, has prevented them getting titles to their lands save after long delays and at great expense:
- (d.) Compelling them to have their lands surveyed before ascertainment of title has also cast a great burden on them:
- (e.) In many cases the ascertainment of title to a block has taken years to complete.

We venture to affirm that if Europeans had been placed in the same position as Maoris in regard to their titles, they also would have had thousands of acres unoccupied. It may be also pointed out that many Europeans own unoccupied lands, and we think it has not been suggested that such lands should be confiscated by the State.

The Dominion, in our opinion, has a duty to the Maoris. Let the Maoris have time to learn farming according to European methods, and let agricultural instructors and guides be appointed to train them. If the Maoris fail when proper means are taken to teach them, and when their titles are complete, it will be time enough to cavil at their unused lands. There are, it must be confessed, many Maoris who have no desire to become farmers, who are lazy and without ambition; but who can say that their present state is wholly their own fault? Their contact with a different civilisation and a different environment from their old ways and customs, the evils of our civilisation that they have not been trained to avoid, can explain many of their failings. If we did our duty to them, there are promising signs that the Maoris would soon prove themselves industrious settlers, and become valiant, trustworthy, and zealous citizens. To do nothing for them, to let them drift and degenerate, to seize their lands because they are not such active settlers as Europeans, would mean the destruction of the race. And if such were the end of New Zealand's treatment of this great Native race, the European inhabitants of the Dominion would be ethically injured in a way that we perhaps cannot adequately realise. In our opinion the people of New Zealand must be both just and magnanimous to the Maoris, if we do not wish to sow the seeds of injustice and selfishness amongst the European population—seeds that may produce a crop that will injure our descendants—that is, if we believe that there is a moral law in existence in the world.

We have the honour to be

Your Excellency's most obedient and humble servants,

ROBERT STOUT,

A. T. NGATA,

.Commissioners.

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