

Act, 1906.” The result is that preference cannot be given in leasing to the owners or to Maori tenants specified by themselves, as contemplated in the system of leasing to Maoris provided by Part II of “The Native Land Settlement Act, 1907.” We think that the law requires amendment to give this preference. (See G.-1j, pp. 8 and 55.)

2. The problem was presented to us, in dealing with papakainga areas in lands vested in the Board, that no power exists for defining what beneficiaries shall have the use of these papakaingas. They are reserved, we take it, for all the beneficiaries, and if a dozen reserves were made in any block all the beneficiaries would be entitled to residence on and use of each of them. We are of opinion that during the currency of the leases the use of the papakaingas should be restricted to beneficiaries to be determined by the Board or other tribunal. Absentee owners should *prima facie* be excluded, also owners who may take leases of sections; and as between resident owners no one owner should have the use of more than one papakainga in any block. If this were not done we think that the difficulties of the communal system would be intensified by the restriction of the beneficiaries to papakaingas without defining their rights of user and occupation. The difficulty we understand has already arisen in regard to such areas in blocks administered by the Board in the north of Auckland (see G.-1j, pp. 8 and 55).

There are also matters affecting special districts which require legislative action:—

1. As to Native lands within the Urewera Native District Reserve we recommend (see G.-1A),—

- (a.) That the election of the General Committee contemplated by “The Urewera Native District Reserve Act, 1896,” should be validated by Parliament. This is necessary in order to avoid delay that must be incurred if the machinery of the Act had to be employed. The appointment of the Committee is urgently required in the interests of settlement, as the Committee has offered an area of 28,000 acres, since increased (so we understand) to nearly 80,000 acres, for disposal by lease.
- (b.) The term of lease should be limited to fifty years, as in the case of leases of Maori lands in districts outside this reserve.
- (c.) That provision be made enabling exchanges to be effected as between individuals or families with a view to consolidating their interests as far as possible.
- (d.) That the respective functions and powers of local committees and of the General Committee be more clearly defined.
- (e.) In view of the possibility that the Commissions which have from time to time investigated the titles of lands in this district may have made errors either in the inclusion or exclusion of names of owners or claimants, the Native Land Court or the Chief Judge thereof be given powers of amendment as provided by section 39 of “The Native Land Court Act, 1894.”

2. Thermal-springs District: We have submitted three reports on lands in Rotorua County and within the Thermal-springs District (see G.-1E, G.-1H, and G.-1N). We have indicated in those reports the amendments we consider advisable to be made in “The Thermal-springs Districts Act, 1881,” in order to carry out our detailed recommendations with regard to the disposition of the various blocks, and in the interests of settlement of the extensive country subject thereto.

We have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's obedient servants,

R. STOUT,

A. T. NGATA,

Commissioners.

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