

shown under heading (a). As the South Island Landless Natives Act, 1906, has been repealed without making any provision for the completion of the work begun under the Act, it would appear that amending legislation is required to validate the proclamation of reserves and the issue of grants for the areas shown under headings (c) and (d), in order that the recommendations of Commissioners Smith and Mackay should be given effect to.

The return above shown of 4,064 landless Natives to whom land has been allotted would seem to require some explanation in view of the fact that the census return in the Year-book for 1905, about which time the list of names was compiled, shows only a total Native population in the South Island of 2,021, and of these many already held land. This may be partly accounted for by the fact that a proportion of the beneficiaries are of a lighter shade than half-castes, and are not included in the census of the Native population; but it was also brought under our notice that in many cases individuals had received more than one grant of land under different names, while names had been put on the list of persons who had been dead for many years.

In regard to lands for which the titles have already issued the matter is beyond recall; but in cases where the lists of names have not yet been gazetted we would recommend that before the titles are made out an inquiry should be held by the Native Land Court as to the *bona fides* of each claim.

(2.) *Whether the lands so set apart or permanently reserved, or any and which of them, have been duly applied for the purposes for which they were so set apart or permanently reserved.*

We find that a certain proportion of the reserves in the Nelson and Marlborough Districts have been occupied by the Natives entitled thereto—namely, Okoha, Port Gore, Endeavour Inlet, Edgecombe, Raetihi, and Te Mapou.

In regard to the reserves in Otago, Southland, and Stewart Island, practically none of them have been occupied by the persons for whom they were set apart. We deal with this matter later in our general report and recommendations.

(3.) *Whether by any process or system of consolidation of reserves or interests or other means, or by exchange for other more suitable or conveniently situated lands, the purposes for which the lands set apart or permanently reserved can be better provided.*

In dealing with this phase of the subject we consider that the ideal to be aimed at would be that each grantee should have his individual holding and occupy it personally; but we find that in actual practice there are insuperable difficulties in the way of the ideal being attained, for the following reasons:—

- (a.) In most cases the reservations are remote from the present homes of the beneficiaries.
- (b.) The people to whom the land has been awarded are in some cases either too old or too young to start in a strange locality to found a new home.
- (c.) The land set aside in some instances is not suitable for subdivision into small areas.

In the allocations made by Messrs. Smith-Mackay Commission in 1905 the system adopted was to group family awards into one section, and this method has been carried out with a fair measure of success, though in the evidence given before us some cases were cited where members of the same family had awards made in widely separated sections.

(4.) *Whether the purposes can be better provided by reserves for hapus or families rather than by the appropriation of separate areas to individual Natives.*

For the reasons stated in (3) we consider the system of allotting the land in family groups to be the most practicable way of dealing with the reserves in those cases where the Native owners wish to personally occupy, though, as we show later on in the report, the probability is that very few will avail themselves of the opportunity of doing so.