

To treat the lands as of nominal value would no doubt have been a fair way to look at the question if the original intention of the Crown to make adequate reserves or provision for the Natives had been properly carried out. The only known principles at that time, and which it is only reasonable to think that the statesmen had in mind, since they actually approved, were the system of tenths, or the reservation of one-tenth of all land sold for the benefit of the Natives, and a scheme of 15 or 20 per cent. of the proceeds of all resales of the land by the Government being earmarked for the welfare of the original owners of the soil <sup>1 MacKay,</sup> (Lord John Russell, 28th January, 1841). Had such a system been carried out <sup>p. 2.</sup> it must be admitted the Natives of the South Island would have been, had they held to the one and a quarter million acres which they would be entitled to, very rich landholders to-day. But this was not adhered to, and therefore it is necessary to consider the price the Government should pay as something more than a mere nominal consideration which was to be further augmented by future benefits to the remainder of the land.

In order to ascertain what would be a fair thing for the Government to pay it is necessary to ascertain, for comparison, what private individuals were paying about that period. Fortunately, we have statutory authority for this. In the Land Claims Ordinances of 1841, Schedule B, the following prices are laid down as what would be considered fair and reasonable value of lands at the dates mentioned :—

Period when the Purchase was made.								Per Acre.			
								s.	d.		s. d.
From 1st January, 1815, to 31st December, 1824	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	6	to	0 0
"          1825,                  "          1829	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	6	to	0 8
"          1830,                  "          1834	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	8	to	1 0
"          1835,                  "          1836	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	to	2 0
"          1837,                  "          1838	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	0	to	4 0
"          1839,                  "          1839	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	0	to	8 0

It will be observed that these prices increase very rapidly towards later years, actually redoubling themselves in the last three years. It has to be remembered, however, that individuals in dealing would not be confined to any class of land, and would naturally only buy the pick of the country, or land that had some special value to them.

Turning now to Government purchases about the time in question, we find that close to the period in review the Government bought about 300,000 acres of land in the North Island at 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre. Out of this about 40,000 acres were reserved to the Natives. <sup>1888, I.—8, p. 71.</sup>

In the South Island, so far as we can ascertain, the price paid per acre by the Government was :—

- 1844—Otago : 400,000 acres ... .. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre.
- 1847—Wairau : 3,000,000 acres ... ..  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per acre.
- 1849—Port Cooper : 59,000 acres ... ..  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre.
- 1849—Port Levy : 121,000 acres ... ..  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre.

In all these cases, in addition to the price paid, there were also reserves granted. It may therefore safely be assumed that the real value was never less than the amounts paid, and would at the very least be, say, twice as much. On the other hand, this is a very large block of land, and would require, before it could be profitably utilized, to be provided with means of access, and some of it would therefore lay unprofitable for a time. But for the front or eastern portion a demand had already been created, and was only awaiting completion of the title to be taken up at once, which differentiates it somewhat from the position that existed in 1839. We have already allowed for the waste lands.

Let us take the Otago price, not as being a fair criterion as to the actual value (Mr. Tuckett, the Company's agent, had suggested paying 6d. an acre for that land), but as being the very lowest price that could be taken into consideration, and as forming a basis for making our calculations. Probably it had a higher value. <sup>2 MacKay, p. 10.</sup>