

R E P O R T.

THE Board, consisting of the following persons :—

Mr. C. W. Ligar, Surveyor-General, Chairman ;

Major Nugent, Major 58th Regiment, late Native Secretary ;

Mr. W. C. Daldy, M.H.R. ;

Mr. T. H. Smith, Acting Native Secretary, and Resident Magistrate, Rotorua ;

which has met at the desire of his Excellency, to enquire into subjects connected with the Native Race, has the honor to report that, in order to give weight to the opinions it might express, considered it necessary to avail itself of the best information which could be obtained from persons acquainted with the Natives, both as regards their original state, and the relative position they have assumed, in connection with the European population.

1. With this view, the Board requested the attendance of the persons named in the accompanying Memorandum, who, without exception, cordially entered into the feelings which dictated the enquiry, and have unreservedly placed at the disposal of his Excellency the result of their varied experience.

2. From this source the Report has been principally drawn. It will be found probably to differ from individual opinions which have been put forth on the same subject, but this is rather to be expected than otherwise, for the Board has found that what is applicable in one locality is not so in another.

3. Before entering into the subject of purchasing land from the Natives, it will be necessary to make a few general remarks explanatory of the manner in which the Natives hold their land, and on a few other subjects connected therewith.

NATIVE TITLE TO LAND AS TRIBES.

4. It appears that the title or claim to land by Tribes arose from occupation, dating sometimes from remote periods, and from more recent conquests, followed by occupation either by themselves personally or by remnants of the conquered people.

5. That this title existed no longer than it could be defended from other tribes.

6. That the boundaries were in some cases clearly defined and admitted by adjoining tribes, but that in many others they were quite the reverse, and were causes of constant quarrels.

7. That narrow belts of land as being claimed by two tribes, could not have been occupied by either without causing an appeal to arms. That there is no part of the country which is not claimed by some party or another.

8. That as land is inherited in the female line, the constant inter-marriages between the tribes, led to the descendants by such marriages having claims to land in more tribes than one.

9. That it frequently happened that one tribe gave land within their own limits, to the members of another tribe for assistance rendered in times of danger, which gifts were held most sacred.

10. That claims to land were made by one tribe and admitted by another as compensation for the murder of a chief thereon or other injury.

11. That an accidental death of a chief on the land of another tribe gave his family a claim to it.

12. It will therefore be seen that no tribe, has in all instances, a well defined boundary to its land, as against adjoining tribes, and that the members of several other tribes are likely to have claims within its limits.