

Though I have done my best to keep these remarks within compass, yet they have unavoidably run to some length. In fact, by the course of events, and by repeated discussion during the last few years, the several parts of the Native problem, and their mutual relations and connections, have become more manifest, and the order in which they may be attempted with best prospect of success more apparent. This has rendered it necessary for me to touch on nearly every part of the work to be done, in order that each part may be seen in its proper place and its due proportions.

If some of the proposals herein made appear at first sight inadmissible, I only ask for a patient hearing and serious consideration. For the views here expressed have been formed not lightly or rapidly, but after long continued observation, and by the aid of light drawn from every available source, and after much conference with persons of various classes and of different ways of thinking on these subjects.

I regard this Act as the turning point in our work. If it can be brought into smooth and safe operation, and be made acceptable at the outset of our proceedings, it will powerfully attract the Natives to our system, and give us the means of gradually and quietly introducing that system into all parts of the country.

1. For this end the greatest care and forethought are required, not only because the work is in itself complicated and difficult, but also because we have to overcome great obstacles. We have to commend our measures to a population in which there exists a wide-spread and deep distrust of the Government. There are, it is true, many amongst the Natives who are attached to us, and who are convinced that in union with us, and conformity to our usages, lies the only hope of their race. Yet even these are perplexed and harassed by the contrarities of our so-called policies, by the divisions of our political parties, and by the language of our newspapers. We do not readily estimate the effect of these things on the minds of men keen and shrewd, yet ignorant and ill-informed, and at the same time well aware how vitally their own interests may be affected by them. Another large portion of the population is demoralised, sore of heart and almost desperate, driven half mad by losses and sufferings, by uncertainties and fears. Everywhere the land needs rest.

Time is needed not only for the settling down of men's minds, but also for the preparation and revision of our own plans; for the success of this measure must depend entirely on the manner of working it. It might be so worked as even to complicate our difficulties and diminish our influence. The solicitations and the keen competition of land buyers, working secretly and sometimes unscrupulously against each other might, unless checked by proper regulations, raise up again, even in an aggravated form, a general irritation and opposition, such as were produced by the old system. Our one hope of success lies in our proceeding on a very limited scale and in a very measured way in the outset, and in our mode of proceeding being so framed as to exclude to the utmost all sources of irritation, and to produce by the most facile mode a clearly advantageous result. Considering that we have to construct and test our mode of proceeding as we go on, and to ascertain by experience many things which no forethought can suggest or devise; considering also the extreme difficulty of finding agents fit for this work; it is evidently necessary to begin our work on a very limited scale and in some district which is well prepared to receive our operations. We may be quite sure, that in working in such a district, and in appearance for that district only, we shall be really working under the eyes of all. Our operations will be keenly watched by the Natives in all parts, and the benefits or disadvantages carefully noted and discussed everywhere. On the other hand, to keep a number of operations going on at the same time, and that with inferior instruments, would be to increase unnecessarily the chances of error and failure. If our work shall be successful in a single district, and our system be seen to yield real and substantial benefit to those who come within it, that system will readily find acceptance elsewhere, and in due time spread itself through the country.

#### *The Certificate.*

2. The principle of "The Native Lands Act" is to make the certificate of the Land Court the primary evidence of Title, and the basis of all our dealings with the land: a principle which appears to me sound, and even necessary, as the only mode of avoiding great difficulties. The requiring of such a certificate can be no cause of suspicion; because every man sees that for the peace of the land, and as a safeguard against fraud, some public inquiry and some certificate to show the results of the inquiry are necessary. To require a certificate which asserts on the authority of a Native Court that a certain block of land, properly identified and delineated thereon, belongs to certain Natives enumerated therein, and to require and connect therewith an actual survey and marking out of the land, will be seen to be a reasonable and necessary precaution for the good of all; a needful security against mischief between the races and even war. We know that the offer of a Crown Grant for their land is apt to be regarded by the Natives with suspicion, and declined as seeming to involve an admission that their title to their lands is defective, or that it depends on the Pakeha rather than on their own forefathers.

Another, and a weighty reason for preferring the certificate is, that a Crown Grant would at once bring with it our English Law of Real Property, our canons of descent, as well as a large body of rules not understood or even heard of before; and so would cast upon the Natives a burthen which would be to them intolerable. We must be on our guard lest we discredit Crown Grants, so as even to render it impossible to induce Natives to accept them; which we certainly shall do if we introduce them as a means of security and protection, and if afterwards a crop of questions and disputes shall grow up, not to be settled except by reference to the Supreme Court; that is to say, to a Tribunal which to the great body of the Natives is by reason of distance, cost, and their own ignorance of our procedure and our language practically inaccessible. Mr. Dillon Bell, in moving the second reading of "The Native Lands Bill," clearly pointed out the nature of this difficulty and the necessity for propounding for the Native Districts a body of Rules touching interests in land and the transfer and devolution of them, which should be substantially English but adapted and simplified. I believe the remedy proposed by Mr. Bell to be perfectly practicable; but until we are in a condition to propound such Rules and to set up local and accessible Courts to interpret and administer them, I think it is absolutely necessary to avoid all these sources of difficulty and to keep within safe limits. The