

succession arising under any certificate of title or Crown grant issued under any of the repealed Acts or the Act in question. Owing to the narrow scope of the Act in this direction, other cases of a cognate character that might have arisen under any other class of grants could not have been adjudicated had it not been for the provisions of "The Native Grantees Act, 1873," clause 5, which extends the provisions of "The Native Land Act, 1873," to all grants, of whatever class, issued to more Natives than one, but the case of individual grants, which are numerous, seem to be unprovided for.

The retrospective action of "The Native Grantees Act, 1873" will be the means of preventing a great deal of injustice being done in cases where grantees formerly held land as joint tenants. Instances have come to my knowledge in which Natives have joined together to purchase land where some of the number have only contributed a small sum in proportion to others; and had the law remained unaltered, these persons might have, in the course of events, ultimately become the sole possessors, to the detriment of the descendants of those persons who were more equitably entitled. There are many cases also where Natives have, through ignorance of the nature of a Crown grant, included the name of a friend, who had not aided in acquiring the land, and have subsequently regretted the action on becoming acquainted with the character of the document.

The Natives of Waikouaiti are very anxious that their reserve should be individualized. Considerable dissatisfaction prevails amongst the industrious members of the community at the present condition of affairs, as they find that the system of holding property in common is very disadvantageous. The reserve in question was divided by the Native Land Court in 1868 into four blocks; but the size of the several parcels is found to be inconvenient, owing to the number of interests concerned. A further subdivision can be made under the provisions of clause 89 of "The Native Land Act, 1873," and grants issued in severalty to individual owners. I would beg, therefore, to recommend that this course should be taken; but before the Court could adjudicate, the land would have to be divided into individual sections. The owners of the reserves in other localities in the South, holding under titles from the Court, have also expressed a desire to have their land individualized in the same manner, as the present mode of tenure is very unsatisfactory to the majority of the persons concerned.

My letters of April 29th, and of the 5th and 12th instant, will have advised you of the adjustment of several outstanding questions in connection with the Kaiapoi Native Reserve.

I have, &c.

ALEXANDER MACKAY,

Commissioner.

The Under Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 44.

The Rev. J. W. STACK, Christchurch, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 30th May, 1876.

I have the honor to enclose my report on the Canterbury Maoris for 1875-76.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister for Native Affairs, Wellington.

JAMES W. STACK.

REPORT on the CANTERBURY MAORIS for the year ending 30th June, 1876.

1. For some years past the adult Maori population of this province have been extremely healthy, and have generally escaped the prevalent diseases which have proved fatal to their children and to their European neighbours. This year, however, they have been less fortunate, and death has rather thinned their ranks. Of those who died, Reihana Moemate, of Arowhenua, and Henare Tawhiri, of Kaiapoi, will long be missed; both were highly useful members of the Maori community, and possessed the confidence and respect of all around them. Quite half of those who died were carried off by low fever. The first cases occurred at Arowhenua, during a gathering of Natives which took place there in April, 1875. The building in which those who attended the meeting slept and spent most of their time was ill ventilated and very damp, and there, probably, the fever originated. Shortly after those who went from Kaiapoi returned home the fever broke out there, and nearly every Native has had it—many died, and among them five of the school children. Everything that could be was done to check the disease. The Natives had the best medical advice that could be procured, and whatever the doctors ordered in the way of nourishment was provided for them. The Natives were urged (for a long time in vain) to seek change of air. Finding that their unwillingness arose from the fear of carrying infection to other places I applied to Colonel Packe, the officer commanding the Canterbury Volunteers, for the loan of a few tents, which he very kindly supplied me with. Several families were then induced to move to the sea side, where change of air and diet proved of great benefit to them. No fresh cases of fever have occurred during the last three weeks, and it is to be hoped that the epidemic has now passed away.

2. The practice of letting their reserves instead of working them keeps the Maoris poorer than they need be; and unfortunately they persist in letting them, as a rule, under their value, and no effectual means can be taken to prevent their doing so. They will not employ an experienced agent, nor adopt the necessary means to secure obtaining the full value for their land in the open market. They are extremely jealous of official interference. They seem to think that if any one comes between the owner and the tenant, the hold of the owner upon his land is weakened, and he may eventually be deprived of it altogether. They prefer a bad bargain made by themselves to a good one made for them. They would rather submit to a loss than forego the pleasure of dealing with their own property. Where they have reason to think that the arrangements they have made for the disposal of their property will be objected to by the supervising officer, they take the precaution of obtaining and expending an advance on the proposed rental; and as they can hardly ever refund the money at once, when