

No. 4.

MEMORANDUM for the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department, *re* an Extract from the Hokitika *Evening Star*, of the 5th September, 1879.

22nd September, 1879.

Visit of the Minister of Mines at Greymouth.

A DEPUTATION, consisting of the Mayor (Mr. R. Nancarrow), and Councillors Wickes, Griffen, Barkley, and Eissenhard, and the Town Clerk, waited on the Hon. Mr. Gisborne.

After a discussion relative to the desirability of vigorously prosecuting the harbour works, the following matter was drawn attention to:—

“The Mayor said there was only one other grievance, and that was in connection with the Native Commissioner. Some years ago the Native Commissioner, Mr. Alexander Mackay, promised to give a subsidy towards the maintenance of the streets. He had done so for some time, but latterly he had discontinued paying it, and the Commissioner was some £700 or £800 in arrears.

“After some conversation, the Hon. Mr. Gisborne said the land was reserved under the Act of 1856, and he would bring the subject under the notice of the Native Minister, so that some arrangement could be come to. He thought it only fair that the Natives should contribute something towards the maintenance of the property from which they derived such a large revenue.

“The Mayor having thanked Mr. Gisborne for his courtesy, the deputation withdrew.”

As I note that the Hon. Mr. Gisborne informed the deputation that he would bring the matter under the notice of the Hon. the Native Minister, I beg to submit the following information on the subject:—

In the year 1870 the Government sanctioned an expenditure out of the Greymouth Native Reserve funds, at the rate of 10 per cent. on the net rental collected on the Native reserve within the Borough of Greymouth, in aid of rates, such contribution to be expended in the improvement of the streets within the reserve; the understanding being that the aid so afforded was merely to be considered as a concession, and was to cease in course of time.

In accordance with this arrangement, an annual subsidy was paid the Borough Council for five years, the amount expended in that manner being £1,746 19s. 2d.

Independent of the abovenamed sum, additional moneys have been also contributed at various times since the occupation of the estate, to aid the outlay for the improvement of the property. The total amount expended in that way during the first ten years—viz., to 1st July, 1875—represents an annual contribution at the rate of 20 per cent. on the income collected within the borough.

The Council have been frequently informed of the cause that led to the discontinuance of the subsidy, and, even as late as February last, I personally informed a deputation from that body, of whom the Mayor was one, that the fund was now in so low a condition, in consequence of the perpetual drain on it for protective works at Arahura, and other additional expenses, that it was no longer in a position to pay the annual subsidy, or to meet the amount the Council considered to be due from the last date of payment; consequently they must cease to calculate on these moneys as a source of income.

It seems to me, therefore, in very questionable taste, the Council being fully aware of the reason why the subsidy was discontinued, that opportunity should be taken of the presence of the Hon. Mr. Gisborne at Greymouth to enlist his attention to the question by a side-issue.

I have not sufficient data by me to furnish a full return of the amount contributed by the fund in aid of protective works and town improvements, but I can safely state from memory that it represents fully 20 per cent. on the net income collected at Greymouth during the first ten years, and I submit, in respect of the question raised, that the Council were not justified in appealing to the Government to obtain the continuance of an expenditure that was only sanctioned in the first place as a concession, but has been regularly paid until circumstances necessitated its discontinuance.

A. MACKAY,

Native Commissioner.

No. 5.

COPY of EXTRACT from MEMORANDUM by Mr. ALEXANDER MACKAY, Commissioner of Native Reserves, Nelson, *re* Greymouth Native Reserve.

July, 1877.

THE Native reserve at Greymouth, upon which a large portion of the town of that name stands, comprises an area of 500 acres, and was set apart in 1860 for the use and occupation of a section of the Ngaitahu Tribe, then residing on the west coast of the Province of Canterbury.

In consequence of the discovery of gold in the Grey District in the winter of 1865, a large demand arose for business sites near the mouth of that river, and, the Native reserve offering greater facilities for that purpose than the surrounding land, the business portion of the community located themselves there. As this mode of irregular occupation was likely to lead to serious complications with the Native owners, the Government requested me to proceed to the West Coast, and take such steps as would legalize the occupation of the land. It was found on investigation that a number of persons had unadvisedly entered into arrangements with the Native owners for the occupation of the land adjacent to the river frontage, without being aware that such agreements were invalid. The agreements entered into were mostly for a short time, with a right of renewal, and, as all the occupants had paid the full sum that had been demanded by the owners for the use of the land, it was considered advisable, in order to rectify any difficulties that might eventually occur if this state of affairs was allowed to continue, as well as to protect the interests of all concerned, to bring the reserve under the operation of “The Native Reserves Act, 1856,” with the consent of the Native owners. This proposition was willingly assented to by the Natives, as they foresaw the difficulties that were likely to ensue through the irregular occupation of their land, as well as their own incapacity to deal with the question.