

Act of 1886, and thereby all Native lands otherwise unrestricted as to disposal were set free except those prohibited in that respect by section 3 of "The Native Land Alienation Restriction Act, 1884."

FRESH LEGISLATION RECOMMENDED.

In the fresh Native Land Court Act the following provisions should be made:—

1. The Judges to be given the status of a Judge of the Supreme Court, and to hold office during good behaviour; salaries to be fixed and paid without further appropriation.

2. Special Judges and one Native Assessor to be appointed to settle absolutely the titles in all incomplete and outstanding purchases and leases, and to validate, by an order of the Court, any transaction proved to have been entered into in good faith between the parties thereto; and wherever a fraud shall be found to have existed, or the common law to have been broken in other than mere technical matters of omission or commission, then to revest the land conveyed, or such portion of it as may be just, in the vendors or lessors: Provided always that the said Court shall have full power as arbitrators in all cases brought before them, subject to the provisions of this statute, to decide all questions at issue between the parties, and to give such decisions as may appear to them just and reasonable; and in all cases the said Court shall have power to make valid and effectual titles in accordance with their verdicts and decisions, which titles shall be valid and effectual for all purposes, and may be registered under the Land Transfer Acts in force in New Zealand.

6. The Chief Judge, in deciding to grant a rehearing, to have the power to direct that such rehearing may be held by himself, or by the Judge who originally dealt with the case, or by one or two other Judges, as he may decide. The decision of such Court to be final.

4. The Chief Judge, with the assistance of the other Judges, to reconsider the question of revising the present scale of fees payable by suitors and witnesses in the Courts, with the view of making them, so far as is judicious, less burdensome, consistent with sufficient safeguards against the time of the Court being taken up with unnecessary repetition or irrelevancy of evidence.

5. To also draw up a code of Native usages and customs regarding the tribal ownership of land, giving the different significations that may be in vogue in the several Native districts.

The following Acts should be revised, and consolidated into two Bills, viz. :—

(a.) "The Native Land Court Act, 1886" (No. 24), and its amendments (No. 37, 1888, and No. 32, 1889).

(b.) "The Native Land Frauds Prevention Act, 1881," and its amendments (No. 38, 1888, and No. 31, 1889).

(c.) "The Native Committees Act, 1883" (No. 19), and its amendment (section 18 of "The Native Land Court Act, 1888" (No. 37)).

The new Native Land Administration Act and the Native Land Court Act should contain the following provisions:—

There should be saving clauses in each Act respecting all incomplete proceedings and transactions, prohibiting in the future all dealings between private individuals and Natives for their lands until such lands had been proclaimed under the New Zealand Administration Act as open for settlement, and then only such dealings to be carried on under the provisions of such Act.

Lands in the King-country should be restricted, as they will be very much enhanced in value by the Central Railway, and Government should have some benefit from the construction of the line.

Provide a Compensation Court composed of a Native Land Court Judge and two Assessors—one European and one Maori—to assess the value of all Native lands which the Government desire to take, or the rental of any land, in cases where the District Officer cannot come to terms with the owners.

*The Native Land Administration Act.*

This Act should be administered by a central Board, consisting of three Europeans and one Maori, experienced in Maori usages and customs, and experts in valuing lands—the Chief Judge and Surveyor-General to be members *ex officio*—who shall be a body corporate by the name of "The Native Land Administration Board," and by that name shall have