

is not always in the interest of the Maori beneficiaries, and is distasteful to them.

- (2.) Incorporation of the owners of a block or adjoining blocks, and the appointment of a committee of management with power to sell, lease, or mortgage. This system rests on the good-will of the owners. The procedure entails expense in the obtaining of signatures, and the legislation on the subject raises many disputed and doubtful points. It is capable of improvement, and will be found useful in the case of communal lands intended to be farmed by the owners.
- (3.) The appointment of trustees approved by the Governor as provided by section 3 of "The Native Land Laws Amendment Act, 1897." Very little land has been conveyed to trustees in accordance with this provision. It is practically a dead-letter.
- (4.) Administration by Maori Land Boards constituted under "The Maori Land Administration Act, 1900," and amendments, and reconstructed under "The Maori Land Settlement Act, 1905."

We have already noted that the tendency in policy between 1900 and 1906 was in the direction of compulsorily vesting lands in these Boards, upon one pretext or another, for administration. We are of opinion that these Boards must be used much more freely and on a greater scale in future if large areas of unoccupied Maori lands are to be opened to settlement.

In arriving at this conclusion we have carefully considered the many questions that present themselves for investigation and answer. The solution must under the circumstances be a compromise, but its efficacy must depend largely on the view that the Legislature takes of the present needs and the future possibilities of the Maori race.

#### THE POSITION OF THE MAORI RACE.

The Maori race is, in our opinion, in a most difficult and critical position. There is great pressure from European settlers to obtain possession of their lands. Crown lands suitable for settlement are limited in area, while large tracts of Maori land are lying unused. The position of the Maori people deserves careful and immediate consideration. There are many of the tribes and hapus in what we might term a decadent state. They have lost the habits of industry of their ancestors, and they have not acquired the habits of the European in this respect, and they are looking to the future with no hope. The race in many parts of the colony has declined, and seems vital in only a few parts. What is to become of the Maori people? Is the race to pass away entirely? They are a people able physically and intellectually. We have been amazed, in meeting some of the chiefs who have appeared before us, at their intellectual vigour. We doubt if among uneducated Europeans who have had no greater advantages than the Maoris there could be produced the same percentage of men of alert intelligence. If also it is considered that half a century ago the race were living as cannibals, the immense development of the Maori people must surprise every one. The race is worth saving, and the burden and duty of preserving the race rests with the people of New Zealand. So far back as 1865 it was declared by statute that the Maori people were citizens of New Zealand, entitled to all the privileges and advantages of citizenship ("The Maori Rights Act, 1865"). The Maoris, we believe, can not only be preserved, but also become active, energetic, thrifty, industrious citizens. This is not a matter of speculation. We have seen it in some instances. On the east coast of the North Island there are industrious Maori communities just as well-behaved and just as industrious as European settlers. We see in the Thermal Springs District Maoris acting as gardeners, as labourers, and mechanics, doing work as well as Europeans, and they have been doing such work for years. And where opportunities have been given to Maoris to obtain the higher education they have acquitted themselves well.