

1908.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE LANDS AND NATIVE-LAND TENURE :

INTERIM REPORT OF NATIVE LAND COMMISSION, ON NATIVE LAND IN THE COUNTY OF OPOTIKI.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Native Land Commission, Morrinsville, 17th June, 1907.

To His Excellency the Governor.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We have the honour to submit for your consideration a report upon Native lands in the County of Opotiki.

The Commission held sittings at Opotiki, Torere, Omaio, Te Kaha, and Orete, and are in possession of data supplied by the Waiariki Maori Land Board.

Opotiki is a new county, recently formed out of the eastern portion of Whakatane County. It extends from Ohiwa on the west to Whangaparaoa on the north-east. Within it are the following Maori tribes: Whakatohea, between Ohiwa and Opape; Ngaitai, at Torere; Whanau-a-Apanui, between Hawaii and Omaio; Whanau-a-te-Ehutu, at Te Kaha; and Whanau-a-Pararaki, at Raukokore and Whangaparaoa.

WHAKATOHEA.

Dealing first with the Whakatohea Tribe, we find that they have little land left in their hands. The lands about Opotiki were confiscated by the State by the same Act which affected the lands of the Ngatiawa at Whakatane. The Government subsequently granted reserves out of the confiscated area, the principal block being Opape Reserve, of 20,290 acres. The title to this has just been settled by the Native Land Court. It is not good land, and at best can only be called second-class land. The owners are desirous of reserving all but a small area. Beyond this the Whakatohea have by ancestral right portions of Whakapaupakihi, residual areas from former sales to the Crown near Motu, and a remnant of the Oamaru Block. Of the latter the Crown has by purchase at various times acquired 87,897 acres. The residue, owned by the Whakatohea, is 16,773 acres (including 4,814 acres owned by their Tuhoe kin). Of this they offer 3,063 acres for lease to the general public, and stipulate that no part shall be sold.

We are of opinion that the Whakatohea Tribe has no surplus land for sale. The total area they now hold is 35,449 acres. Of this they offer 6,733 acres for lease to the general public, retaining 28,676 acres. Two of their subtribes are industrious, and have already started sheep-farming on a small scale. Upon