

Waiau—a block of 43,000 acres. It is six miles, I understand, from any access. There is the reserve at Hokonui. There are roads through it, but with the exception of a small part it is covered with bush. There is the land at Waiau-Rahiri, 10,000 acres, thirty miles from any railway, and no road. There is a reserve at Waikawa, 5,000-odd acres, twenty-five miles from a railway. There is a main road through it, but no branch road. So it can be seen that the Landless Natives Act, beneficent as it is in its purpose, has not yet operated in any way to relieve the position as regards the Natives. It is difficult to see how or in what way it can be made so, because, if the Native is to cultivate 50 acres, it would require some £200 to enable him to get there, put up a house, clear the land, and keep himself for the first two or three years. Then the question the Committee will ask will be, what is it you claim? We respectfully hope that this will be the last occasion on which we shall have to approach Parliament on the subject. It is to be hoped that the proceedings now—which are the result of labours on the part of the Natives themselves for the past two or three years—will end in something that may for ever wipe away the stain which, I venture to think, must rest upon the Government of this country unless it retrieves the breaches of faith which have characterized the past in regard to this purchase. In their report Messrs. Smith and Nairn, basing their action on Mr. Mantell's evidence given in 1872 and on the other evidence which they refer to, suggest that the solution of the Natives' claim should be arrived at by a reference to "tenths"—that if that method of making reserves had been carried out originally there would have been ample reserves—and they indicate what that would amount to. Mr. Mackay, in his report of 1874, does not deal with it quite from the same point of view, but he there takes the fair price that ought to have been paid according to the average price paid elsewhere in the colony for Native lands, and his recommendation was at the rate of something like 150 acres per head. It has been said that this question of "tenths" was an afterthought. Of course, there is no one now alive who could say what happened on the occasion of the representations made by Mr. Mantell; but I have information about the "tenths" from Mr. Parata, who got it, I understand, from Matiahā, who was a very influential chief amongst the Ngaitahu, and who knew what had taken place; and, as you know, a matter of that kind amongst the Natives is a matter that is constantly spoken of and is handed down. Matiahā was most emphatic in his declaration that they were promised reserves upon the basis of "tenths"—not perhaps that they were to have "tenths" allotted to them in the same way as was done in other places, but that they were to have reserves on that basis. Mr. Parata tells me that Matiahā gave accounts of interviews with Governors that were held long before the matter came prominently before Parliament—namely, in the early sixties—in which this question of "tenths" was brought up. In the evidence given by Mr. Mantell before the Committee—I.-8, page 89—he refers to one interview that took place. He says,—

"At an interview the Natives had with the Lieut.-Governor at Akaroa, before we commenced proceedings, when I acted as interpreter, the Natives of Kaiapoi, or, rather, those interested in Kaiapoi, were present in large numbers. They spoke to the Governor about reserves to be made for them. Ques. (Hon. Sir J. Hall): Lieut.-Governor or Governor?—Ans.: Lieut.-Governor, Mr. Eyre. They then said they would like to have a block commencing at the Kowhai on the north, and south to the Waimakariri, or Waikirikiri, or Selwyn, and extend that width across to the west coast. Ques. (Captain Russell): What area would that be?—Ans.: Sir John Hall can tell you. Hon. Sir J. Hall: The best part of the Province of Canterbury, and a considerable part of the Province of Westland. Witness: The Lieut.-Governor said that they could have it. I said to him in a low voice—for many of the Natives understood English—that if this was promised, at all other places similar reserves would be required; the Island would be cut up into a succession of belts all across, and it would be of hardly any use for me to proceed. The Lieut.-Governor was rather angry, but he then left the matter for me to decide. Captain Russell: Then you would lead the Committee to understand that the Natives, in parting with their land, had a very distinct idea that very large reserves of land would be made for them?—Ans.: That would look like it; but I cannot say. I never led them to expect very large reserves, but that there would be amply sufficient for their maintenance in future years. That was my own understanding of it. Ques.: But does that 10 acres in any degree represent what the Natives imagined they would get?—Ans.: No."

Of course, one recognizes that if any award is made in consequence of these proceedings there is a difficulty at the present time in making an award in the shape of land in localities that would be most suitable for the Natives, as was possible at the time the purchase was made; but what has already been urged is, I think, a sufficient foundation for approaching the matter in a liberal spirit. I would point out, as Mr. Mackay has done in one or two of his memoranda, that, with the exception of D'Urville and Stewart Islands, 37,700,000 acres were acquired from the Natives for £27,417—that is, apart from reserves—whereas the Ngaitahu territory of over 20,000,000 acres was acquired for £2,000. So it can be seen at once that the sum paid for the greater portion of the Middle Island is out of all proportion to the total sum that was paid for the whole of the lands within the colony—more than one-half of the land simply did not bring one-thirteenth of the purchase-money.

Hon. Mr. Carroll: The Ngaitahu purchase preceded the others by some years, I suppose?

Mr. Hosking: Ngatiōoa was first, and Symonds's block was purchased before Ngaitahu. There is a further point that may be mentioned: In Nelson, where the "tenths" were given, we have no complaints from the Natives of inadequacy. They, I understand, are well provided for. In Westland there was a block of land purchased, after Ngaitahu, for a sum of £200, but 100,000 acres were set aside there, which was at the rate of at least 100 acres per Native; and we have no complaints from Westland. The place that has been the worst treated of all is Ngaitahu, where