

The Commissioners will find a detailed account of the state of the Maori population living at the Otago Heads in a Report laid before the Presbytery in the course of the past year.

Reserve 16. I propose to give this number to the Reserve at the Taieri, which at present bears no number. This Reserve was made at the time of the purchase of the Otago Block by the New Zealand Company; it is situate on the North Bank of Taieri River, extending from its mouth to the junction of the Taieri and Waihola waters, it comprises about 2,300 acres; timber is scarce in proportion to its extent, but there is more than sufficient to supply the wants of the present Native inhabitants.

A portion of this Reserve at the Western extremity is remarkably valuable for a site of a Village a few Natives live there, but the land is not generally made use of, the Natives preferring to cultivate, the side of hills, and in doing so they have destroyed much valuable timber.

I find casual mention of a Reserve near the Clutha River, it is not accurately laid down in any map, and no mention is made of it in the Record Map. I have no means of ascertaining its extent, indeed I do not think that it has ever been fixed.

Besides the above Reserves, which may be said to be the whole coming strictly within that description, a Reserve was made at Port Chalmers of nearly an acre in extent, it consists of sections 403 and 404, and a portion of unsurveyed land, it is not shewn on the Rural Plan.

This Reserve was recommended by Mr. Mantell and was sanctioned by the Governor in 1854-55.

A quarter of an acre adjoining Section 461 was purchased by Mr. Mantell from Mr. R. Williams with the sanction of the Governor.

The Reserve was made under pretence of its being required for the use of the Natives landing at Port Chalmers, but for that purpose it is entirely useless, as it has a steep frontage to the Beach of considerable elevation, it has never been used by the Natives.

A Reserve for a similar object was made at Dunedin, its exact extent is not defined, but comprises all the land between the shore of the Harbour and the East side of Princes street, and abuts upon the land upon which the Manse has been built, this Reserve was made upon the authority of the Governor, but it appears to me that His Excellency the Governor exceeded the powers vested in him in this latter case, the land in question having been already set apart as a Public Reserve under the Otago terms of purchase.

It will however be the especial duty of the Commissioners under the "Native Reserves Act," to ascertain the correct legal position of both these latter Reserves, if Reserves at all they are, lands over which the Native Title has been extinguished; as Reserves for the object contemplated, they are utterly useless.

In closing this Report I cannot but regret that it should be so imperfect, and that it should have been so long delayed by my being under the necessity in the intervals afforded from the discharge of my other duties, of reading over the whole correspondence of Mr. Commissioner Mantell with the Colonial Secretary during three years, and having had repeatedly to search the Land and Survey Office for maps, will I trust be an excuse to your Honor for the delay.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

W. H. CUTTEN, Chief Commissioner.

[A true Copy.]

(Signed)

JOHN GILLIES, Commissioner.

To His Honor the Superintendent.
Dunedin, 21st June, 1858.

Province of Otago.

Return pursuant to an Order of the House of Representatives of all Lands held by the Commissioners of Native Reserves for the Province of Otago, under the New Zealand Reserves Act, 1856, down to 1st July, 1857.

Answer.

No Lands are held by the Commissioners.

—Also, Copies of any Reports furnished by such Commissioners in compliance with the 11th Section of the Act.

Answer.

No Report under the 11th Section as the Commissioners had no transactions with regard to the Lands, but a General Report is herewith forwarded.

—Also, an account of all monies received and expended by them as such Commissioners.

Answer.

The Commissioners received no money, they had to bear their own expenses.

(Signed)

JOHN GILLIES, Commissioner.

J. CARGILL.

ROBERT WILLIAMS.

Dunedin, 12th June, 1858.