

Effect on land purchasing operations.

Besides the advantages that would accrue in a purely native point of view, it cannot be doubted that such a system, if carried out, would very much facilitate land purchasing operations, and by removing the present obstructions, would pave the way to a more general alienation by the Natives of their waste lands.

Willingness of the Natives to co-operate.

That such a scheme would meet the approval and co-operation of the Natives themselves—without which nothing could be done—may be safely inferred from the readiness and evident interest with which the Chiefs of the Kohimarama Conference received and discussed the Governor's Message on this subject, of the 18th July, 1860.

The following passages from speeches may suffice:—

Extracts from speeches in the Conference. (*Maori Messenger*, 1860.)
Te Ururangi.

Tohi Te Ururangi, (*Ngatiwhakaue*): "Now let us adopt the suggestions of the Governor respecting our lands, and get them all surveyed, lest perplexities should hereafter arise; that I and mine may avoid the chance of a dispute with my younger brother; that I may leave my piece of land unencumbered to my children in the event of my death. * * * The land is the source of all the troubles of this Island. When we return to our home let every man define the boundaries of his land and we shall thus prevent loss of life."

Hukiki.

Hukiki, (*Ngatiraukawa*): "This is the word that we have been in search of in years past: the Governor has now revealed that word to us about surveying our land. * * * Three years have we waited for it, but when will the lands be surveyed?"

Ihakara.

Ihakara, (*Ngatiraukawa*): "I will now remark upon the Governor's Message. It is good. I wish our lands to be defined. That is our desire in order that each may have his portion clearly defined. * * * According to my idea no time should be lost."

Wi Tamehana.

Wiremu Tamehana Te Neke, (*Ngatiawa*): "Now we know that the Governor is indeed a friend of the Maori, because he has consented that our lands shall be surveyed; for this reason I say let the plan be quickly carried out."

Te Rauparaha.

Tamihana Te Rauparaha, (*Ngatitoo*): "We (*Ngatitoo*) and *Ngatiraukawa* will carry this (the partition of tribal lands) into effect. Our tribes are quick in taking up European customs. * * * Let the head (*i.e.* Southern part of the Island) commence it."

Paora Tuhaere.

Paora Tuhaere, (*Ngatiwhatua*): "The Governor proposes subdividing the land. It is right that the land should be apportioned among the owners thereof. * * * The Governor's advice, that disputed lands should be settled by a Committee, is good. That just agrees with what I said in my speech the other day. * * * Should a difficulty arise let it be referred to a disinterested tribe."

Unanimity of opinion.

To shew the unanimity that prevailed on this subject, it is sufficient to observe that only one, (*Hori Te Whetuki*), out of more than a hundred who were present during the discussion, expressed an unfavourable opinion.

As to disaffected districts.

It would not be politic (even were it practicable) to attempt the introduction of such a measure into a disaffected district. The Natives are so extremely jealous in all matters relating to their lands that it is sometimes impossible to disabuse their minds of a suspicion that the Government have an ulterior object even in a measure that is proposed expressly for their benefit. It would therefore be necessary to commence any operations of this kind in a district where both the disposition of the Natives and the physical features of the country would most favor the experiment; and there is little doubt that as the advantages of a better defined tenure become apparent the desire for the new system would gradually spread; in the same way that at Canterbury, the partition of the Kaiapoi Reserve, when it had reached a successful issue, was followed by a general desire among the Natives of the other Settlements to have their Reserves treated in the same manner.

Objections.

It has been objected that the complication of tribal claims arising out of the obvious causes of inheritance, conquest, and intermarriage, would be such as to oppose an insuperable barrier to the proper partition of tribal lands.

Writer's opinion.

It appears to the writer that the question of tribal claims has been needlessly encumbered with difficulties. That there are some *very complicated* claims no one will deny, but it is submitted that these would prove the exception and not the rule, and when they did occur would be so limited in extent as not to occasion any serious embarrassment. On this point I may quote the authority of Sir William Martin, D.C.L.:—"The lands of a tribe do not form one unbroken district over which all the members of the tribe may wander. On the contrary they are divided into a number of districts appertaining to the several sub-tribes. * * * These small districts are in many cases numerous, and are for the most part sufficiently well defined." (Pamphlet, 1846.)

State of tribal boundaries

From physical difficulties of the country, and from the introduction into the tribal possessions of a set of claims arising out of inter-marriage, there are perhaps few cases in which a tribe or *hapu* has a clearly defined or complete boundary to its own lands as against neighbouring tribes or *hapus*; but as a rule it would, it is thought, be a comparatively easy matter to fix, by the mutual consent of adjoining tribes, a fair boundary as between each other, and to determine finally the extent of the imported inter-marriage claims.

A district Runanga for tribal partition.

The best machinery for carrying out the tribal partition would be a District *Runanga*, representing fully the tribes and *hapus* interested in the lands to be partitioned; but the details of any such plan must be ruled very much by circumstances.

Requisites.

I am of opinion that "length of time, publicity, and knowledge of the Maori language"—the same requisites that are given by Sir William Martin as essential to a sound purchase of land from the Natives,—would be found sufficient to ensure a satisfactory and permanent adjustment of tribal boundaries.

Proposal to undertake the experiment.

Indeed so sanguine am I upon this subject, that I should have great readiness in