

# A REPORT

## BY WALTER L. BULLER, ESQ., R.M.,

### ON THE

#### PARTITION AND INDIVIDUALIZATION OF THE KAIAPOI RESERVE, IN THE PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY.

#### I.—INTRODUCTION.

In December, 1859, I proceeded to Canterbury, under instructions from the Government, to visit the various Native settlements, and to report generally upon the condition and requirements of the Natives in that Province. Nature of mission.

In the Report of that Mission (dated 27th December, 1859,) which I had the honor to submit to His Excellency the Governor, when at Christchurch, I took occasion to notice the unsatisfactory state of feeling among the Natives of Kaiapoi arising out of disputed claims to bush on their Reserve; and I urged the partition and individualization of the land and the issue of Crown Grants to the Natives, in severalty, as the only effectual remedy for the evils complained of. The following extract from my Report will show how it was proposed to effectuate this:— Report submitted to the Governor, 27th December, 1859.

“At a public meeting of the Kaiapoi Natives, when this subject was under discussion, I elicited their sentiments by putting forward the following suggestions; all of which met their approval. Extract from report relating to the proposed partition of the Reserve.

“1. That the primary subdivision and apportionment of the land should be arranged by them in *Runanga*.

“2. That as a fundamental condition of the proposed grants, the estates and interests created thereby should be entailed, so as to make them inalienable to persons of other than the Maori race.

“3. That the power of leasing, if allowed, should be modified by certain conditions or limitations.

“4. That the whole of the attendant expenses should be borne by the Natives themselves,—a sufficient portion of the land being set apart for that purpose.

“5. That suitable endowments should be made for the several objects of Churches, Schools, and Hospitals.

“6. That the arrangements contemplated in the two foregoing clauses should be carried out prior to the apportionment of the land (*i. e.* whilst it is common property). \* \* \* \*

“Without committing myself to the above, or in any way compromising the Government, I have obtained the general acquiescence of the Natives therein; and I believe that, if judiciously managed, the object in view may be safely accomplished.”

The subject was again brought before the Governor by the Natives themselves at the general meeting in Lyttelton on the 6th January following. The address presented to His Excellency on that occasion (see *Maori Messenger*, January, 1860,) thus earnestly expressed their desire:—“The voice of all the people is that our land reserves be subdivided so that each may have his own portion. Natives urge the matter before the Governor.

“\* \* \* Our reason for urging the subdivision of our land is that our difficulties and quarrels may cease, and that Christianity and good works may thrive amongst us.” Extract from their address, January 6th, 1860.

His Excellency expressed entire concurrence in the recommendations of my Report, and promised the Natives that their wishes should be complied with. The Governor's reply.

The Native Secretary (then visiting Canterbury,) while extremely anxious to give effect to the proposed individualization, viewed the experiment as a somewhat uncertain one, and was unwilling that the Government should incur the expense of an actual survey while the issue remained doubtful. Accordingly I was instructed to proceed to the ground, and, aided by the Chiefs, simply to mark out and apportion the land among the respective claimants, with the clear understanding that should such provisional partition hold good for a period of twelve months, the Government would give it permanence by surveying the parcels and properly defining the boundaries; and that when every obstacle had been removed, His Excellency would secure to the Natives their respective holdings by Crown Grant. No expense to be incurred for survey.

In so far as concerned the open land, the task of carrying out these instructions promised to be a comparatively easy one; but in dense bush where both area and position would be (in the absence of a survey) purely conjectural; where the so-called individual claims were involved and conflicting; and where the bush to be apportioned differed widely in character from heavy timber to light wood; I plainly foresaw that to divide it to the satisfaction of all parties would be a matter of no little difficulty. I was therefore most anxious to have the services of a competent surveyor, to assist me in fixing approximately the area and determining the position of the bush parcels, as this would have considerably facilitated and shortened my work. As it was, however, I had simply to carry out my instructions, and, in the absence of professional aid, to rely entirely upon my own resources. Instructions.

Difficulties in regard to the bush.

Disadvantage of not having a surveyor.