

not be lost sight of, that a large proportion of the expenses incurred by the Native Land Court have been in the investigation of title to the land purchased under the provisions of the Immigration and Public Works Acts.

The Government have steadily kept in view the twofold objects of providing land for the large influx of population, and of securing those districts to the colony through which public works and undertakings are being carried on.

In the consideration of this question there is another point which should be mentioned—the Government have endeavoured to acquire land in large blocks where possible. The advantage gained is obvious. But in doing so, of necessity lands of all descriptions were included. Much land fit for special settlement has been purchased. Lands supposed to be of average quality have, on closer inspection by the surveyors, turned out better than was anticipated.

Reports of the surveyors have been laid on the Table of the House.

A large area of land has been secured in the Taupo country, which, as every one knows who has been through that district, is generally of inferior description, but even for that there has been considerable competition.

There are some valuable blocks now under negotiation, which, in the course of a few months, will be in the hands of the Government. But I would ask honorable Members, especially those of them who are not acquainted with the difficulties and the sometimes harassing work of negotiation with the Natives, to restrain impatience. Lands are now being purchased in districts where a few years ago a European could not show his face. In proof of this, I would only point to the Taranaki and Upper Whanganui Districts; and if the Government carry on the work as they may deem safe and advisable a large colonial estate will be obtained; but if undue pressure is brought upon the Land Purchase Agents to urge on these purchases, not only will our present good understanding with the Native race be endangered, but the main object in view marred, by unwise and premature action.

Negotiations of this nature can only be carried out with the intelligent assent of the Natives, and this can only be obtained when they have realized the advantages to be gained from having European settlers in their neighbourhood.

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