

by the Governor and three elected by the members of the whole tribal committees of the North Island.

In this Board should be vested all the Maori reserves of this Island, including those reserves now administered by the Public Trustee. It should have the sole power of leasing all Maori tribal lands, under directions from the Native Committees of the various blocks. It should have power to perform the duties incumbent on owners of appointing Committees, where, after suitable notice such owners neglect to appoint; and in cases where Committees neglect to perform their work the Board may perform it for them. It should have power to call upon the Committee of the district or the Native Land Court to determine the title to any block required, or suitable for settlement, and which the Native owners, after notice, fail to bring before the Committee or the Court. It should act for all Natives requiring assistance before the Native Land Titles Court, and give leases of minors' shares when requested so to do by the trustees. It should have sole power and authority over Native lands the title to which may not have been determined in the Native Land Court, and, with the consent of the apparent owners, give licenses from year to year to cut flax or timber from, or graze upon, such lands. It should have full power, with the advice and consent of the District Committee, to erect schools for the education of Maori children; to exchange lands, and, in the interests of the Natives, and with the consent of those interested, to compound claims upon Native lands, or buy interests or shares in the same; and generally to act in all things for the welfare of the Maori people, making all such contracts with the Government or private individuals, as may be necessary in the premises. It should arrange for surveys, improvements, roads, &c., in conjunction with the District Committees for the different blocks. It should examine and report from time to time to Parliament on all the endowments for educational purposes made by the Natives in New Zealand. It should be authorised to compromise with the Government and with private persons in any claim made by the Crown or such private persons to any land or interest in land belonging to, claimed by, or standing in the names, of Maoris, not held in severalty; but this last power should only be exercised when assented to by at least three-fourths in number of the Natives affected by it, and approved after examination by the Native Land Titles Court. It should have power to make regulations and by-laws, which, being approved by the Governor in Council, should provide for the leasing of Maori lands and for their management, as well as for the general performance of the duties and powers of the Board.

To this Board could be relegated most of the matters now coming before Parliament by petition. To this Board all applications for rehearing might be referred. By its existence Parliament would be materially relieved, and the best interests of both Maoris and Europeans be advanced. Not only would the Native Land Board relieve Parliament of the bulk of the Native work now cast upon it, and which it cannot understand—it would also relieve the Courts of much labour. The Maori real-estate management would practically devolve on the Board. The Trust Commissioners' Courts, the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, the officials of the Stamp and Registration Offices, the Survey Department, the Native Department, and the Native Land Court would be more or less relieved; while the Public Trust Office would be delivered from the burden of administering the large reserves which now embarrass it. The public would be able to obtain land in many districts now locked up, in suitable areas, at inconsiderable cost, with perfect titles, and without delay.

FINANCE.

The Government should advance to the Board all necessary sums for expenses, surveys, improvements, &c.; such sums to be recouped out of a percentage to be charged by the Board upon all Maori lands.

In the future administration of lands not held in severalty we suggest a return to the ancient and simple plan of open and tribal dealings. Elective Committees will restore much that is useful in the authority of the chiefs. The old system reduced to law, and accompanied by such safeguards and restrictions as are deemed necessary, and aided by competent machinery, will, in our opinion, be found infinitely preferable to the present. It will be economic, simple, and safe, and it will invite settlement.

If it should be urged that the Maoris have not sufficient intellectual power to bear so large a part of the management of their own affairs, we would point to the evidence of mental capacity contained in all the statements and speeches made before us by members of the Native race. Especially is this the case in the long and logical list of resolutions passed by the large meeting at Wairoa, where for eight days the assembled Natives debated, and, with-