

There is a parcel of land at the head of Lake Forsyth, Section 385, hitherto leased by them from the Crown Lands Department, which ought to be made a permanent reserve on their behalf. It is very important also that some reserves should be made in suitable places along the shores of Lake Ellesmere, with a view of preserving the few lagoons that now exist. These reserves should be made available for all the Natives residing at Kaiapoi and on the Peninsula. The importance now of setting apart fishery easements for the Natives is much greater than heretofore, as they are gradually being deprived of all their former privileges in the settled parts of the country through the drainage of the land, as well as through all the rivers, lakes, and lagoons being stocked with imported fish. The recent decision also in the Waimakariri fishing case has imposed further restrictions on their liberties, consequently it is highly necessary that action should be taken to permanently reserve for their use such places as may now be available, so as to secure to them one of their principal means of subsistence. The Hon. Mr. Mitchelson gave instructions that a small reserve should be set apart for the Kaiapoi Natives adjacent to Lake Ellesmere, but that alone is insufficient for the requirements of all the people; and it is very important that all the available lagoons in the neighbourhood of Lake Ellesmere should be permanently reserved, so as to preserve the right of fishing to the Natives.

There is another question relative to fishery rights which the Natives desire should be submitted for the consideration of the Government, as they consider they are entitled to protection under the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi—I allude to sea-fishing. They assert that under Kemp's deed they are entitled to the full and exclusive right to their sea-fisheries, as there is a distinct stipulation that they shall retain their *mahinga kai*, which includes, besides cultivations, pipi grounds, eel-wiers, and fisheries; consequently, in their opinion, they never voluntarily ceded their rights over their fishing-grounds. They do not wish to cause any complications; but what they desire to obtain is the sole right to fish along the sea frontage of their reserves where such lands abut the coast, as they have no authority at present to prevent European fishermen from catching all the fish near their settlements. The privilege they ask for could be secured to them under clause 4 of "The Fish Protection Act, 1877."

Mr. H. K. Taiaroa desires that the following matter relative to the Otago Head Reserve should be submitted for consideration, as he has suffered a considerable loss in consequence. He states that when the aforesaid reserve was subdivided in 1868, that he and Hoani Wetere Koroko, out of their share of the land, allotted 1,267 acres 2 roods 13 perches to persons who should have been provided for either in the Ngaitahu, Murihiku, or Akaroa Blocks.

He therefore urges, as the Middle Island claims are now under consideration, that an equivalent in land for the acreage gained by the persons alluded to should be awarded to him on his own behalf, and as the legal representative of Hoani Wetere Koroko.

According to the census recently published (G.-2.) the Native population residing at the several settlements in Canterbury and Otago, inclusive of Stewart Island and Ruapuke, number 1,231, of all ages and sexes; but as this enumeration does not exhibit all the population, inclusive of persons descended from Natives, I attach herewith for your information a return of the people included in the enumeration made by myself at the inquiry held at the several settlements, while I was engaged obtaining information relative to the Middle Island claims, by which it will be seen that there is a total of 2,212 persons who belong to the aboriginal race who formerly owned the territory comprised in the several blocks the subject of the aforesaid inquiry.

I also attach, for the purpose of further elucidating the question, Schedules B, C, D, E, and F, containing the following information:—

- B. Return of all land purchased from the Ngaitahu Tribe in the South and Stewart Island.
- C. Return of reserves set apart for each settlement in connection with the purchases made in 1848-9 and in 1856.
- D. Return of reserves made in the Otakou and Murihiku Blocks, including Stewart Island and the County of Westland.
- E. Return of Native reserves, showing the class of land reserved.
- F. Return showing total reserves made in all the purchases.

As regards the possibility of obtaining land for the purpose of satisfying the Native claims: a return (C.-5.) furnished in 1885, by the Surveyor-General, indicates that there is land obtainable both in Otago and Southland adapted for the Natives—viz., at Tautuku and Dean Forest. Blocks of 100,000 acres are described as available at both of these places at that date, and this quantity will probably be found to be still available, as no settlement to any extent has taken place in either of these localities since then.

Notwithstanding anything that may have been urged to the contrary, I have been unable to perceive any justification for changing the opinion held at the date of my report to His Excellency the Governor in May, 1887, as to the general condition of the question, nor can I make any other recommendation for its settlement besides the one therein mentioned, as the question is to a great extent where it was antecedently so far as a satisfactory adjustment of the matter is concerned.

Should nothing of importance result from my efforts to place the question in a position to enable it to be readily understood, I shall have the satisfaction at least of knowing that I have conscientiously endeavoured to perform the duty that devolved on me in the matter.

I have, &c,

A. MACKAY.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.