

1908.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE LANDS AND NATIVE-LAND TENURE:

INTERIM REPORT OF NATIVE LAND COMMISSION, ON NATIVE LANDS IN THE
COUNTY OF ROTORUA.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Native Land Commission, Rotorua, 10th March, 1908.

To His Excellency the Governor.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We have the honour to submit for your consideration the following report on some of the Native lands in the Bay of Plenty District. The report deals with lands in Rotorua County owned by the Arawa Tribe of Rotorua and surrounding district.

ROTORUA COUNTY.

The area of Rotorua County is 629,760 acres, of which 358,512 acres have been acquired by the Crown and Europeans, but chiefly by the Crown, and 271,248 acres approximately are owned by the Maoris.

This area belongs to the Arawa Tribe and hapus connected with it. Some of the Arawa lands (belonging chiefly to the Ngati-Rangitihi Hapu of Matata) are in Whakatane County, some are in the County of Tauranga, and some in East Taupo. These have not yet been inquired into. We hope to complete the inquiries later.

Practically the whole of the lands in the Rotorua County and a large area of the East Taupo County are subject to "The Thermal-Springs Districts Act, 1881," and its amendments. The lands subject to this special Act are excluded from the operation of "The Native Land Settlement Act, 1907." We have accordingly scheduled the lands in the Rotorua County so as to distinguish those within the Thermal-Springs District, and subject to the special Act (First Schedule) from those outside such district (Second Schedule.)

"The Thermal-Springs Districts Act, 1881."

The Governor was empowered by Proclamation to bring under the Act localities in which there were "hot or mineral springs, lakes, or waters," and after publication of such Proclamation it was "not lawful for any person other than Her Majesty to acquire any estate or interest in Native land" in the proclaimed district, "except by virtue of or through the means prescribed or permitted by" the Act. The Act does not prescribe or permit any mode of private alienation. The Native owners could sell only to the Crown. If they desired to lease they could do so only through the agency of the Crown. The Governor was empowered to act as agent for the Native proprietors in dealing with intending lessees, and with their assent