

1909.
NEW ZEALAND.

MAORI LAND PURCHASE OPERATIONS:

REPORT UNDER "THE MAORI LAND SETTLEMENT ACT, 1905," FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31ST MARCH, 1909.

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

SIR,—

Department of Lands, Wellington, 8th June, 1909.

In pursuance of the provisions of "The Maori Land Settlement Act, 1905," I append a statement of the limited land-purchase operations carried out under my supervision during the past financial year, together with a statement of accounts.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM C. KENSINGTON,
Under-Secretary for Lands.

Hon. J. Carroll, Minister of Native Affairs, Wellington.

REPORT.

IN the report for 1907-8 a summary was given of the completed transactions up to that date, and also a summary of the average price paid to the Native owners in each land district. This year, owing to the small vote appropriated for Native-land purchases last session, our purchases have necessarily been of a very limited area, the total for the year being only 6,935 acres 3 roods 8 perches, some of which were areas the purchase of which was not completed during the previous year. To complete this area a total sum of £3,995 19s. 7d. was paid during the year.

Summarised, the purchases completed are as follow :—

						A.	R.	P.		
Auckland	..	..	..	..	..	6,588	2	8	costing	3,544
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	..	..	347	1	0	..	2,430
Totals	..	..	..	..	..	6,935	3	8		5,974

The area purchased in the Auckland District averaged about 11s. per acre, whilst that in Hawke's Bay cost £7 per acre ; but, as the latter area was situated near Dannevirke, adjoining the railway-line and main coach-road, the price was not excessive.

CONTINUANCE OF LAND-PURCHASE OPERATIONS.

Should Parliament provide the necessary authorities, it is proposed to continue the purchase of Maori lands where the owners are willing to sell, and place their lands in the hands of the various Maori Land Boards for that purpose. This can be done under the machinery at present existing. In very many cases Maori owners are anxious to sell to the Crown odd areas which cut into Crown awards and are of no use to the owners, having, perhaps, no road of access, or are of such awkward shapes as to be unsuitable for their own use, though falling into line with the Crown areas, and suitable for settlement purposes when amalgamated with such Crown areas. The Maori Land Boards would receive the purchase-moneys, and be responsible for their division amongst the Maori sellers. It is also hoped to acquire during the coming year a considerable area of land suitable for close settlement out of the Moe-rangi Block, on the Raglan and Aotea watershed, and also to acquire an additional area out of Te Akau Block, Raglan County, to supplement the area of 15,000 acres already purchased and now subdivided into suitable areas for close settlement, the opening of which, under the optional clauses of "The Land Act, 1908," has been deferred until early in next spring, so as to allow the formation of roads of access to be well advanced before the selectors are given possession.