

(7.) *Generally to inquire into and report upon the nature and conditions of the lands not vested in the Public Trustee, and set apart or permanently reserved for landless Natives in the South Island, and of the lands (if any) not vested in the Public Trustee set apart or reserved for landless Natives in the said Waikato-Maniapoto Native Land Court District, and the best methods for dealing with such lands so that the lands or the rents and profits thereof may be applied to the best advantage for the purposes for which they were reserved or set apart.*

As this order of reference summarizes what has gone before, we propose in the first place to give a brief description of each of the reserves and to then follow on with our recommendations.

With the time at our disposal we were unable to visit many of the landless Native reserves, but we availed ourselves of the evidence of Crown Lands Rangers and Government valuers, whenever we had the opportunity of doing so, in regard to the quality and valuation of the blocks.

The lands vary in quality and degrees of inaccessibility, and range in value from £2 10s. an acre to 5s. There are a few fertile patches, and these are occupied, but the blocks on the whole are unsuitable for closer settlement or Native cultivation. The Marlborough lands seem well adapted for selection in fairly large areas by sheep-farmers with moderate means, while most of the Southland blocks contain good milling-timber, and would be taken up by saw-millers if thrown open in areas large enough to warrant the erection of mills and construction of light lines or tramways.

*Tennyson's Inlet Block.*—Tennyson's Inlet contains an area of 6,408 acres, valued at 10s. an acre unimproved. It is very rough and broken, and in parts mountainous. It is not occupied, nor is it fit for profitable cultivation. The only parts suitable for settlement are small areas along the foreshores of the numerous bays. It has been recommended that this block should be set aside as a scenic reserve, and that the Natives should be provided with land elsewhere. The Native owners, recognizing that this piece of land is not adapted for settlement, ask that an area of equivalent value be acquired for their use near their homes in the Wairau Valley, where a small piece of arable land would be of some benefit to them.

We recommend that a careful valuation of Tennyson's Inlet Block be made, and that land of an equal value be obtained, if possible, in the vicinity of Spring Creek, and given to the Natives in lieu thereof.

*Okoha Block.*—This block comprises 1,845 acres of fairly good land. Some of it is heavily timbered, but as there are no sawmills in the vicinity the timber is not being turned to account. There is a long valley running through the block, along which some forty Natives reside. They have already cleared 300 acres, which they allege carry over seven hundred sheep. The soil is better than that of the other blocks in Queen Charlotte Sound, but it would cost over £2 an acre to clear the heavily wooded parts. Eight of the owners possess each a 3-acre residential site on Port Gore, some miles away from the main Okoha Block, with a large area of Crown land leased for a long period lying between.

There is a surplus area of 101 acres in Okoha, and the owners of the 3-acre pieces desire that this surplus should be given them in lieu of the 24 acres on the foreshore. The Government valuer and Mr. Stephenson Smith, ex-Commissioner of Crown Lands at Blenheim, consider this would be a fair exchange as the values are approximately equal. We recommend that this exchange be effected on the written application of the Native owners.

*Miritu Block.*—This is a small block of 360 acres near Miritu Bay, Queen Charlotte Sound. It was reserved in 1909, and appears to have been allotted to nine persons, who take 40 acres each. The names with shares have not yet been gazetted. We recommend that provision be made for doing so.

The remaining Marlborough blocks seem to possess many features in common.

*Endeavour Inlet*, which comprises 847 acres, contains some fairly good land, of which 83 acres are under lease. The balance is in the occupation of the