

## SURVEY LIENS ON NATIVE LANDS AFFECTED BY CONSOLIDATION SCHEMES, AS TO PROVIDING A BASIS OF SETTLEMENT OF.

### *Difficulties in relation to Consolidation and Rate Compromises.*

For some time past consolidation officers have found themselves confronted with insuperable difficulties in the prosecution of the preparation of suitable schemes of consolidation owing to the liabilities for rates and survey liens, with heavy accumulations of interest charges on the lands being dealt with, preventing the ascertainment of the basic net value of individual interests. Legislative and financial provision was made for the payment to and compromises by local bodies of rates. Compromises were negotiated with the local bodies concerned whereby the local bodies agreed to heavy writings-off of the rates indebtedness, general exemptions from rates were granted over a period of years, and payments of the remaining rates were made from the Native Land Settlement Account under the provisions of the Native Land Acts in that behalf.

### *Inadequacy of Present Machinery.*

Section 32 of the Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act, 1927, was passed with a view to facilitating the remission of survey liens in proper cases where the Court was of opinion that any charge for survey might reasonably be remitted, and the Minister of Lands was empowered in his discretion to give effect to any recommendation of the Court. This procedure required the case of the survey lien on each individual block being brought before the Court and a separate recommendation made in respect thereof. As there were many thousands of blocks of land involved, the Native Minister recognized the inadequacy of the machinery provided for dealing with a matter having such a country-wide application, and to meet the position considered the introduction of legislation to provide a simpler method of dealing with the problem in a comprehensive manner.

### *Conference of Departmental Officers.*

On further consideration and after consultation with the Treasury officials, it was decided to call together the officers of the Departments concerned in conference to consider what steps should be taken to overcome the difficulties created by the survey charges, and to suggest whether or not remissions of the whole or part of the accumulated charges should be made in order that the charges might be extinguished, and thus open the way to consolidation and development of Native lands by freeing them of encumbrances.

### *Purpose of Conference and Constitution of Committees.*

In pursuance of the decision to investigate the incidence of the survey charges, a conference was convened which commenced its sittings at Wellington on the 10th November, 1930. The conference, which was attended by representatives of the Treasury, the Lands Department, and the Native Department, was opened by the Hon. the Acting Prime Minister, and was addressed at length by the Hon. Native Minister as to the purpose of the officers being called together and the need for an impartial examination of the facts. After general discussion, the Hon. Native Minister suggested that it would be desirable to form subcommittees to deal with each district and scheme affected, and this was accordingly done, the subcommittees set up being as follows:—

#### *North Auckland—*

Comprising Kaipara, Bay of Islands, Hokianga, and Mangonui Consolidation Schemes: Messrs. Thomson, Cooper, Bell, and Dillon (Native Department), Taylor (Treasury), and Darby (Lands Department).

#### *King-country—*

Comprising the Counties of Waitomo, Otorohanga, Kawhia, Ohura, and Taumarunui: Messrs. O'Donnell and Knight (Lands Department), Shepherd and Jones (Native Department).

Bay of Plenty-Rotorua-Taupo District: Messrs. O'Donnell, Knight (Lands Department), Mitchell, Royal, and Anaru (Native Department).

Hawke's Bay-Gisborne-Bay of Plenty (Gisborne District): Messrs. Primrose and Shaw (Lands Department), Judge Carr and Messrs. Harvey and Swift (Native Department).

### *Contribution to Survey Costs.*

The extent to which Native lands generally have been called upon to contribute towards the cost of their survey since the coming into force of the Native Land Act, 1909, which set up the existing procedure for carrying out the surveys, is as follows, viz.:—

	£	s.	d.
Expenditure on Native land surveys from 1st April, 1910, to 30th March, 1930	611,480	15	8
Balance outstanding at 31st March, 1930—	£	s.	d.
Principal .. .. .	199,044	0	0
Interest .. .. .	91,224	0	0
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