

By Dr. Monro :—Can you inform the Committee what was the amount of land over which the Native title was extinguished by the New Zealand Company in May, 1847?

I will endeavour from memory to do so : in the Province of Otago there was a block of 400,000 acres ; in Nelson, the Blind Bay and Wairau Districts, which might contain 100,000 acres ; in Wellington there was none to which the native claim was finally settled, though towards the end of 1847 arrangements were completed by Col. M'Cleverty for acquiring about 300,000 acres, the negotiations for which were very forward in May : at New Plymouth, the quantity was about 30,000 acres.

The Company's estate then actually acquired, and in process of acquisition, would appear to be about 850,000 acres?

Yes, at the time named (May, 1847).

In your opinion, could the Company have fulfilled its contracts with its land purchasers, out of lands to which it had itself extinguished the native title?

Certainly not.

The large purchases in the Middle Island to which you have referred, were made by the Company, acting as the agents of the British Government, and with money advanced by Parliament?

They were, in point of fact, made by the Government in every case, and though the Company nominally paid the purchase money, the British Parliament provided it ; for the Company were admittedly insolvent in 1845, and all the purchases from the Natives which they paid for since that, were paid for out of Lord Stanley's loan of 100,000*l.*, or Earl Grey's loan of 156,000*l.* and not with any money raised by the Company itself,

Were you in Nelson in July, 1847?

Yes.

You took part in the adjustment of the land question at that time, made by the resident land purchasers?

Yes.

Have you any knowledge of Colonel Wakefield having brought over with him a legal opinion by which the Company was advised that it was under no legal liability to the Nelson Settlement?

I believe he did.

Did you hear anything at the time of the Company having received an adverse opinion?

No, nor till long after : nor if I had heard of it should I have taken the part I did in the adjustment, and I believe I may say, as Chairman of the Committee of Land Owners at the time, that none of them would either.

Do you consider any large portion of the land over which the Company had extinguished the native title in May, 1847, to have been of a valuable character?

No. A very small proportion was so ; by far the largest part was mountainous and inaccessible, and unfit for agricultural purposes. I speak, of course, of those districts with which I am personally acquainted ; but I think my general impression to be correct.

By Mr. Macandrew : Subsequent to the retirement of the Company considerable lands had been acquired in the Otago Province, to the extent of several millions of acres?

Yes, I believe so.

By Mr. Picard : Was there not a large portion of the land at present comprised in the Nelson Province, in which the native title had not been completely extinguished prior to the surrender of the Company's charter?

Yes, there were some considerable native claims which had not been extinguished at that time over a large portion of the Nelson Province, but not specifically in particular districts of it.

The Committee adjourned until 10 o'clock on Friday, 7th July.

ROBERT HART, Chairman.

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FRIDAY, 7TH JULY, 1854.

Committee met pursuant to adjournment.

Present :—Messrs. Hart (in the chair), O'Neill, Ludlam, King, Forsaith, Picard, Macandrew, and Dr. Monro.

Donald M'Lean, Esquire, of Auckland, Native Land Commissioner, was examined, but the notes of his examination not being in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House, his further examination was postponed until Friday, the 21st.

Committee adjourned to Monday, 10th instant, at 11 o'clock.