

1873.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE PURCHASE OF NATIVE LANDS.

(REPORTS FROM OFFICERS ENGAGED IN)

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

No. 1.

Mr. JAMES MACKAY, jun., to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

New Zealand Native Land Agency,
Auckland, 24th January, 1872.

SIR,—

Referring to the conversation which took place between us on the subject of the purchase and acquisition by the Crown of Native lands in the Hauraki and Upper Waikato districts, I have the honor to submit to you the following report as to the blocks it may be deemed advisable to acquire; also as to the plan which I would recommend to be pursued for the accomplishment of that object through my Agency.

In order to arrive at a correct conclusion as to the present state of the lands proposed to be acquired, it will be advisable to place them under three heads, viz.:—

1st. Lands within the proclaimed Goldfields at Hauraki and Coromandel, which form the subject of agreements between the Natives and the Crown for gold mining purposes.

2nd. Lands within the Hauraki district, not included in the proclaimed Goldfields, and which do not form the subject of agreement between the Natives and the Crown for gold mining purposes.

3rd. Lands in the Upper Thames and Upper Waikato districts held by Hauhau and obstructive Natives, some portions of which have been leased to Europeans for the depasturage of stock.

The lands under the first head are contained in the Cape Colville, Tokatea, Kennedy Bay, Tiki or Ngaurukehu, Waiau and Matawai, Manaia north, Manaia south, Waikawau, Whakatete, Tararu, Karaka, Otunui, Whakairi, Kirikiri, and Puriri blocks.

1. Cape Colville Block.

This is of considerable extent, the area of unsold lands may be roughly estimated at 50,000 acres. After deducting the pieces required for Native reserves, the area available for settlement is but limited; the greater proportion of the block being hilly, timbered country—unfit for cultivation. Gold has at various times been discovered in several places within its limits, but no mining claims are at present occupied there. Some pieces of land have been sold to Europeans, but they form but a small proportion to the whole. The kauri timber at Cabbage Bay, Tangiaro, Matamataharakeke, and the northern portion of Kennedy Bay has been sold to Europeans owning saw-mills. I have surveyors employed on the external boundaries of this block at the present time. The title is much disputed.

2. Tokatea Block.

This is the most valuable portion of the Coromandel Goldfield at present worked. The probable extent is 15,000 acres. This land is leased by the Native owners to the Crown at the annual rental of £500. All the available kauri timber, excepting that situated near Paul's Creek, has been cut by saw mill proprietors. Mr. Gibbon's mill at Kikowhakarere, has been recently removed; and that of Mr. Charles Ring, is principally employed to drive quartz crushing machinery. There is no available agricultural land on this block, other than what is in the hands of European settlers, or is required for Native reserves. This block would be difficult to acquire in consequence of its known value. No accurate survey has been made of it.

3. Kennedy Bay Block.

This block was formerly surveyed at Government expense, and contains about 9,500 acres. No further outlay for surveys will be required, excepting the repayment to me of the sum of £25 expended on some alterations, and a plan which was made by Mr. Gwynneth, Licensed Surveyor, in order to meet the requirements of "The Native Lands Act." This block contains sufficient available land for Native reserves; and there is a flat in addition of about 600 acres, formerly leased to Messrs. Cruickshank and Smart, but now abandoned by them, which is suitable for a town site and settlement. The remainder—say 8,000 acres—is mining country of considerable value, and should, if possible, be acquired at once, as delay will increase the difficulty of purchase. The kauri timber on a portion of this block has been sold to Messrs. Cruickshank and Smart, who own a saw mill there.