

[*Inspected and found to be worthless soil and limited area.*]

Opakau, advances to be placed against Ngatirangitahi lease.

[*Ngatihineuru, the owners desire this.*]

Opureke, advances to be placed against Runanga No. 1. lease.

Kahakaharoa should remain as it is, pending further arrangements which may be made with Te Heu Heu and *hapu* for completion of this transaction. This block is the only timbered land abutting on the shores of Taupo Lake, and its possessions must at some time become of importance to the public. The area will probably be found to contain several thousand acres. An investigation into the title took place in 1875 before Major Scannell and Captain Mair, when all the leading men of Taupo gave evidence, and the result was held to be distinctly favourable to the claims of Te Heu Heu, who made this agreement of purchase with Mr. Locke and myself on behalf of the Government in 1873. I would recommend, therefore, that this negotiation be followed up when a favourable opportunity occurs.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary Native Department.

HENRY MITCHELL,

Land Purchase Officer.

No. 5.

Captain PORTER, Gisborne, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Gisborne, 29th June, 1877.

I have the honor to furnish the following report of my land-purchase transactions since the 1st July last:—

In the accompanying tabular statement, details of areas, prices, &c., are given.

Completed purchases to date are—

									Acres.
Waitahaia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	50,067
Aorangi-wai	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,268
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	57,335

the deeds of which are now in Wellington.

2. In course of completion, thirteen blocks containing a total of 45,360 acres.

3. Unsurveyed, not yet adjudicated by Native Land Court, but for which applications are gazetted, three blocks, estimated to contain 25,000 acres.

Several of the deeds of conveyance of the blocks shown as in course of completion are actually completed, but, owing to the land having passed the Court on a plan approved as a sketch one only, I am unable to forward deeds till a certified map is submitted to the Court by the District Surveyor. No judgment has yet been given on the Papatipu Block (but investigation of title is complete), owing to one of the survey lines not being closed. The same is the case with the Taitai Block, but, as surveyors are now making corrections, I shall at the earliest opportunity request the District Officer to move for a judgment of the Court.

In reference to two of the unsurveyed blocks, Tututohora and Pukeamaru, I would mention that, owing to a spirit of opposition on the part of a factious *hapu* at Waipapua, tutored by Henare Tomoana and other representatives of the Napier Natives, I have not been able to get the lands surveyed without possibly causing a difficulty. This obstacle, however, no longer exists, and the surveys are to be proceeded with at the end of July next. The Maungawaru Block it is contemplated to survey about October.

In describing the capabilities of the land, I may do so connectedly so far as regards the following blocks, which are contiguous—namely, Aorangi-wai, Aorangi-wai No. 1, Waitahaia, Te Ngaere (two blocks), and Maungawaru. The front portions of these lands along the Mata River are well adapted for special settlement, as the low-lying portions are fitted for agriculture and the hills for grazing. The back portions of Waitahaia and Te Papatipu are principally forest, and will not be used for settlement until lands in the other portion of the district become occupied; the land itself is of a good quality, as is remarkable with all other lands throughout this East Coast District—much superior to other parts of New Zealand, which may be principally attributable to the mildness of the climate, laying so far eastward.

The Tututohora and Pukeamaru Blocks do not come under the foregoing description, being situated at the other end of the district round East Cape; both are close to the coast but are principally forest. Tututohora is quite level, and contains a good deal of totara timber.

Taitai is situated near Aorangi-wai, and is easy of access, and well adapted for pastoral purposes.

In former reports from myself and S. Locke, Esq., recommendations have been made to open up this country by a main line of road from the head of the Poverty Bay Valley to Waipapua, which, by the natural features of the country, will, I feel assured, in course of time become a necessity as the population increases; and I do not doubt that so soon as the lands negotiated by Mr. J. A. Wilson are completed the Government will see the advantage of opening up a road, and thus greatly enhance the value of the public purchases.

Relative to the probable time by which all transactions may be completed, I would point out the peculiar exceptional difficulties I have to contend with in my district. In the first place, the ownership of the land is very numerous, attributable to Ngatiporou being a large tribe occupying comparatively but a small area of country. One of my purchases will illustrate this—viz., Korakonui: 605 acres, 103 owners; proportion of purchase money to each, 12s. This is a fair sample of my purchases. The next difficulty is the manner in which grantees are scattered all over the district, entailing a great deal of travelling to obtain signatures, which duty has to be performed in the presence of a Licensed Interpreter and Resident Magistrate—a very irksome and unnecessary provision in the Land Act, as I often lose opportunities of obtaining signatures of grantees presenting