

notice published in the *Gazette* No. 111, of the 25th instant (folio 1684), that the request contained therein has been practically complied with.

Martin Chapman, Esq., Solicitor, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. J. MORPETH,
(for the Under-Secretary.)

No. 22.

SIR,—

Survey Office, Auckland, 20th December, 1880.

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with Mr. Gills' telegram of the 26th November, I left Rotorua on the 27th November, and rode all over the Patetere District with Mr. Cussen, arriving at Cambridge on the 1st December. I then obtained a very fair knowledge of the country, quite sufficient to enable me to make a selection out of the proclaimed block of two blocks of land to represent the value of the sums advanced by the Government towards the purchase.

The Patetere Blocks within the Proclamation boundary, as now adopted and shown on accompanying tracing, may be described as an open undulating country of "downs," the soil of which varies much in quality in different localities, being nowhere first class, but generally second, and in some parts quite third class. In the whole of the 110,000 acres I do not think there are more than 5,000 acres which could not be ploughed, the undulations being so gentle, whilst on Tokoroa and other places there are considerable plains quite level, and nearly always grassed, as indeed are all the valleys, the hills above being fern-clad. The most broken part is towards the south-east side, where the long flat ridges come down from the Patetere plateau, being divided from one another by level open grassy valleys, usually with water in them, and up which it is easy to ride or indeed sometimes drive. These valleys will form excellent lines of road leading from the plateau to the downs, but they will be exceedingly difficult to cross, on account of the cliffs which line their sides as they approach the plateau; they are in fact "canons," the perpendicular cliffs being formed of volcanic tufa, which seems to be the bed rock of the whole country. The soil is more or less composed of pumice and vegetable matter, the former predominating in Tokoroa to such an extent as to make the soil quite white and barren-looking, though there are here and there parts which are of a superior quality. The soil of the northern group of blocks is much superior, and is the best I saw, though even here it is very light and poor-looking. These blocks will take grass however, especially in the damp valleys, where the clover is spreading everywhere, with some other grasses. The yellow hawk weed, or dandelion, has quite taken possession of the country. The native grass is the common wi, or yellow tussock, useless for anything.

The great drawback to the Patetere downs for settlement purposes is the want of wood. There is not a single tree anywhere on the proclaimed block, the nearest being the Waotu forest, in the hands of the Natives, on the west side, and the Patetere plateau on the east side, which will probably soon be in the hands of Europeans. It is from one of these two places that all fencing, firewood, and building materials must come, though, perhaps, settlers on Tokoroa could supply themselves from Maungaiti to the south at five miles distance. The Waotu forest contains the best totara and matai timber that I know of in this province. On this account I value the land on which it stands at from £5 to £50 per acre. The Natives have here a source of revenue which will, with care, enable them to live in comfort and ease for many years. From the above description it will be gathered that Patetere is not suited for agricultural purposes, but that it is adapted for pastoral pursuits. I believe, indeed, that the value of the country has been over-rated, at all events for small settlers; holdings of from 1,000 to 5,000 acres would, I think, be the sizes most suitable for the country.

My instructions are to select land for the Government of a fair average quality. I consider this will be achieved by Government taking the Huihuitaha and Pokaiwhenua Blocks, containing 11,425 acres and 14,365·5 acres, out of Tokoroa; the two first-named being two of the best blocks, and the latter one of the worst blocks. Assuming the cost of acquiring the lands as follows, we shall have—

Huihuitaha and Pokaiwhenua, 11,425 acres, at 12s. 6d. per acre ..	£7,140 12 6
Tokoroa, 14,365·5 acres, at 5s. per acre ..	3,591 7 6

Amount of Government advances	<u>£10,732 0 0</u>
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In addition, there is a sum of £250 due to the Government for the survey of Tokoroa, on behalf of the Native owners. This I would also recommend should also be taken out in land, giving the Government an estate of 26,790 acres for settlement.

I have indicated on the tracing the course of main roads made and proposed. It will be seen that the Cambridge to Napier Road will pass through both blocks, and that another main road from the King country (Upper Mokau) must in all probability pass through the Tokoroa Block, and thence on to Rotorua. This junction will be an important site for a township, and this falls within the land proposed to be taken. I would also venture to predict that the future line of railway from Wellington to Auckland will probably pass the same spot.

I have, &c.,

S. PERCY SMITH,
Chief Surveyor.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

No. 23.

To His Excellency Sir A. GORDON, K.G.C.M.G.

SIR,—

The following resolution was passed at a public meeting held at Te Awamutu on the evening of Saturday, the 4th instant:—

Resolved, That a respectful address be drawn up and forwarded to His Excellency the Governor, showing that the action of the Government in withdrawing the Proclamation over all Native lands, and