

The Commissioner of Crown Lands at Auckland was informed to the above effect on the 12th instant, with a request that he would place himself in communication with Mr. Taylor and the Highway Board on the subject.

I herewith return the original petition.

General Crown Lands Office, Wellington,
2nd August, 1882.

H. J. H. ELLIOTT,
Under Secretary.

No. 6.

REPORT of MESSRS. BATHGATE & REEVES, Commissioners, appointed to inspect Run No. 106, Tuapeka District (Smith's Run), Dalhousie Hundred, Otago.

Dunedin, 23rd February, 1881.

On Wednesday, 16th February, we proceeded to Lawrence for the purpose of inspecting Run 106, Tuapeka District, in terms of remit from the Board.

Leaving Lawrence we drove up a hilly road, over rolling country, to see the land in Tuapeka West, which was opened for sale within four or five years past, and which, we were informed, had been reported as unfit for agricultural settlement. We found that the whole area to be disposed of had been taken up, and that cultivation was being carried on very successfully. On attaining the summit level, from which we had a good view all round, it was pleasing to see the fields covered with an abundant crop, reaping machines busy at work, the paddocks properly fenced, and here and there comfortable-looking homesteads built and in occupation. A settler assured us that there would be at least 1,000 tons of wheat from this new district this season. Last year the wheat yielded thirty-eight bushels to the acre. The district is situated within Professor Hutton's Kaikoura formation, the most fertile of the older geological divisions. The soil, where recently ploughed, appeared to be of superior quality, and capable of high cultivation. Indeed, we could not help feeling surprised and gratified that a district, which only a few years ago was a rough wilderness of dense manuka scrub, some of it 12 feet high and upwards, the refuge of wild cattle, had now been transformed by the industry of the farmers into a profitable agricultural settlement. From the summit we had a good general view of Run 106, which lay adjacent. It seemed to fall gently from its highest point down towards the Molyneaux. In its general character it was not so rough in contour, nor at so high an elevation as the land we had traversed. We descended to Tuapeka Mouth, and returned to Lawrence by the eastern side of Run 106. As the result of our close inspection, the opinion we had formed from the distant view was more than confirmed. The land is within the same formation as Tuapeka West. It is not situated so high, nor is the country so broken, and it is more accessible. It is also comparatively free from scrub. Judging from the cultivated land adjoining, as well as from the general appearance and capability, we have no hesitation in expressing our opinion that the run is admirably adapted for agricultural settlement on deferred payments.

In addition to its natural advantages, it has the special advantage of being situated within 10 miles of a railway station, to which there is an excellent road. We have every reason to believe that if the land is opened for settlement it will be rapidly taken up.

In reference to some land mentioned at the Board not having been taken up, and which is still open, it is right to say that it is rough and broken country, situated back towards the Waipori heights, altogether of a different character and elevation from that which we examined. On the whole, we are strongly of opinion that Run 106 ought not to be offered again for pastoral lease and occupation.

We have, &c.,

JOHN BATHGATE,
CHARLES S. REEVES.