

land is very bad, the only good soil being seen on the tops of the hills, and consequently is very limited. A few totara trees are growing in the patches of bush along this line.

Of minerals nothing was noticed but the coal seam in the Tangarakau Gorge; this is a similar coal to that now being worked on the Mokau River; the seam is about five feet thick.

A little hard cemented gravel was seen in the Tangarakau River banks, and a small quantity of shingle was seen in the Mangaroa River.

I have, &c.,

R. W. HOLMES,
Resident Engineer.

The Engineer-in-Chief, Wellington.

No. 4.

EXTRACT from a REPORT by MR. LAWRENCE CUSSEN, District Surveyor, to the ASSISTANT SURVEYOR-GENERAL, Auckland, dated 4th July, 1884.

Description of the Country.—The triangulation has not sufficiently advanced to give a detailed description of the country, which, of course, will be supplied when my maps are sent in. The following curtailed sketch may prove useful in the meantime, as I think the quality and quantity of agricultural land in the King country has been over-estimated by most people: The open country lying between the Punu and Mokau Rivers, through which the Waipa and its tributaries flow, contain the only extensive area of good agricultural land that I have seen. This comprises an area of about 700,000 acres, bounded to the east by the Rangitoto, Ranginui, and Wharepunga Ranges, and to the westward by the broken, wooded country extending southward from the Pirongia Ranges to the Mokau River at Tautoro. This country contains a variety of excellent land for all agricultural purposes, comprising limestone, rich volcanic loam, and, along the rivers and streams, extensive and fertile alluvial flats. Timber for all purposes is easily available. The district is well watered. Roads can be made at a slight cost. Brown coal is to be found in the Hanturu Ranges, to the west of Otorohanga about nine miles; it is also to be found near Te Kuiti, and probably will be got elsewhere when the district is more known, as many of the rivers and streams have particles of coal in them. Between the Mokau and Waimeha Rivers the country is very broken, and the land variable in quality. There is some limestone on the Mokau, near Te Kuiti; but the limestone land is limited in this neighbourhood, and very broken. The valleys are generally open, and the ranges and hills covered with mixed timber, containing rimu, totara, &c., though the totara is not plentiful. There is a considerable area of table-land amongst the hills in this district that is nearly all under forest, and the soil is good; but it is generally difficult of access. About fifteen miles to the eastward of Te Kuiti the pumice-country begins, though after this there is good land in the bush and on the table-lands. The valley of the Ongarue and Waimeha Rivers is very poor—thousands of acres of wretched pumice flats, covered with stunted scrub and dried tussock-grass, with pumice all over the surface. From the Waimeha to Taumaranui some better land is met with. There are small alluvial flats along the banks of the Ongarue, where the Natives have cultivated: on the sides and tops of the fern-ridges the soil is good, but the country generally is very broken. About the Tuhua Mountain there is some good land and plenty of valuable timber, which can be made accessible from Ongarue Valley. Lying between the west of Taupo Lake and the valley of the Ongarue, and extending from Pureora, the most northern peak of the Hurakia Ranges, there is about 300,000 acres of broken country, including the heavily-wooded ranges of Hurakia and Hauhangaroa. The land is very variable in quality, a small stream sometimes dividing a good volcanic loam and a sterile pumice tract; I noticed this even in the table-lands on the mountains. This district is cut up by deep gullies and streams, with table-land between. There is a great deal of valuable timber, including totara, though not a great deal of the latter. The timber would be accessible—at least a good portion of it—from the Te Awamutu and Marton railway-line. Between Taringamutu and South Taupo there is some good bush-land, though broken; there is also a good deal of useful timber, but it will be difficult of access, and roads through this country will cost a great deal to form. On the west of the Waikato River, and extending about twenty miles north from the Hurakia Ranges, is a broken tract of open country, called the Kaiangaroa, containing about 100,000 acres. It is intersected by deep gullies and ravines. The land is poor: bare rocks and landslips everywhere visible. The Maraeroa Plains, at the head of the Waimeha River, comprise about sixty to eighty thousand acres of fairly-good open country, though some of it is poor, with pumice lying on the surface. A great deal of the country around here is level and undulating. The bush-land is variable, some of it good and some a light pumice surface. Finally, outside the area of 700,000 acres before mentioned, lying between the Mokau River and Kihikihi, &c., I have not seen any considerable area of land suitable for general agricultural purposes, though much of the country might be profitably occupied by settlers holding one thousand acres and upwards, and here and there a small farmer would find enough of good land to settle upon.

LAURENCE CUSSEN.

No. 5.

MR. F. M. SKEET, Assistant-Surveyor, to the CHIEF SURVEYOR, New Plymouth.

New Plymouth, 30th July, 1884.

SIR,—In accordance with your instructions, I have the honour to forward the following report on the country between Stratford and Mokau which would be opened up by a line of railway from Stratford to Te Awamutu:—

15—I. 6.