

east to west, its extreme width rather over two miles from north to south, but in one place it is contracted to about twelve chains. The north-eastern point is bounded by Whangarei Harbour. In other parts it is bounded by Native or settled lands, except along portions of its southern margin, which are defined by the Otaiko River.

*Roads.*—The block is intersected by the Maungakaramea Road, which divides it into two very unequal parts, the portion on the eastern side of the road being rather more than one-tenth of the whole. The old track to Maungakaramea *viâ* the Devil's Staircase, now disused, crosses the block further to the west. On the north, a road giving access from the Maungatapere Road was laid off a few years ago.

*Configuration, Natural Vegetation, &c.*—On the eastern side of the Maungakaramea Road the soil is covered with tea-tree and fern, mostly of luxuriant growth. In some places it is intersected by creeks, and is rather swampy. The eastern point forms a low ridge abutting on the railway, as already described. With the exception of this ridge, the portion on this side is fairly level, and most of the swampy land would be easily drained. On the northern side of the road the land rises to the south and west, and is divided into two portions by a gentle ridge running in a south-westerly direction, and obtaining its greatest altitude above the Devil's Staircase, on the southern boundary. A little to the east of the track is the highest point of the block, 896ft. The southern margin of the block is steep and broken, but is more or less clothed with forest, consisting of kauri, tawa, tanekaha, puriri, taraire, &c., of no great value as timber. Two small patches of timber occupy hollows on the eastern side of the old track, one of which—Ruarangi—containing about forty acres, is reserved, on account of its having been used by the Maoris as a burial-place. On the north-western side of the track, two wide open gullies comprise some of the best land in the block. Unfortunately, a Native reserve, Te Hiihihi, occupies the greater portion of the widest, which it pierces like a wedge. On the eastern side of the track two or three somewhat open gullies run down to the Maungakaramea Road, where they open out; but the ridges between all those gullies are of a gentle character: in fact, except in the western extremity, which is of a more broken character, and on the southern margin, there is but little land which could not be brought under the plough. Except the timbered portions already described, the western side of the block is covered with manuka and fern, 2ft. to 6ft. high, except where it has been subjected to repeated burning, to the great detriment of the surface-soil.

*Quality of Soil.*—Large portions of the block, especially the lower parts, consist of a poor, hungry clay, with a few inches of surface-soil, formed by decomposed vegetable matter. The clay, however, is of a friable character, and weathers down quickly when exposed to the atmosphere. In the bottoms of the gullies and hollows, and on the eastern side of the Maungakaramea Road, the soil is of better quality; but in all these places it will require the expenditure of a considerable amount of labour before it can be brought into proper order. The slopes and higher ridges on the western side are superior to the lower land, and may be considered good third-class land, especially in one or two places, where limestone comes to the surface. No really first-class land is comprised in the block. This would be of comparatively small importance were it to be the site of a school of forestry alone; but, as one object to be kept in view should be the carrying-out of experiments with sub-tropical fruits, drug- and perfume-yielding plants, &c., a few acres of good land are absolutely necessary. I am informed that at the present moment a small section of good volcanic land on the northern boundary of the block may be purchased at a reasonable price.

The position of the block is especially suitable for the site of a school, as direct access can be obtained from the railway wharf at a small cost, while it is within easy distance of the pleasant Township of Whangarei. The one drawback consists in the want of a few acres of really good land for experiments in the introduction of economic plants of a sub-tropical character; but this might be supplied at a small outlay. For a school of forestry there is the special advantage afforded by the piece of indigenous forest on the southern boundary of the block. Although the trees are of little value as timber, they would be of the greatest value for teaching-purposes, and would afford great facilities for practical work. Moreover, the block is situate within easy distance of the State forests of Maungatapere, Pukenui, Puhoi, and others, in all of which work must be carried forward at an early date. The area of the block is amply sufficient for the formation of plantations, orchards, experimental grounds, and farm, and might be made to include an arboretum sufficiently extensive to contain a specimen of every tree or shrub capable of being grown in the colony. This alone would prove of the greatest value to settlers interested in arboriculture, and would ultimately prove an attractive feature of the district.

*Maungatapere Forest Reserves.*—The Assistant Surveyor-General, Mr. S. P. Smith, suggested that these reserves might possibly be found well adapted for the purposes of a school, as the land is of good quality, and one or two excellent sections closely adjacent might be added for experimental purposes if desired. I therefore deemed it advisable to examine them for the purpose of ascertaining their capabilities. The reserves are situate nearly fourteen miles from Whangarei, and are intersected by the Kirikiri Stream. Inclusive of three small irregular areas on their margins, they comprise about nineteen hundred acres. Much of this area is covered with timber, a considerable portion of which is kauri of very good quality. Taraire, tawa, puriri, walnut-leaved cedar, &c., form a mixed bush on other parts of the reserves. Many acres of