

Tawhiao, and those of the King party who for the past nine years have been living at Whatiwhatihoe have recently removed to a new settlement that they have formed at a place called Pukekawa, near to Mercer, and on the western side of the Waikato River. The land that they are now living upon is mostly owned by Natives, and was awarded to them by the Compensation Court many years ago out of Waikato confiscated lands. The fact of Tawhiao having removed nearer to European settlement and to civilisation, instead of retreating from it, is, I think, proof sufficient that he has no desire otherwise than to live in peace and harmony with Europeans. Several reasons may be given for his having left a district which has so long been his home, and which, through his continued residence therein, had got to be called the King-country, but I think the main reason is the fact of the Ngatimaniapoto and its sub-tribes having some years ago withdrawn their allegiance and support from him and the King movement, and their having lately brought the larger part of their land into the Native Land Court in order to have the title thereto defined in accordance with our laws. This action on their part was a direct blow at Tawhiao's supremacy as King, and in more senses than one has cut the ground from under his feet. It has generally been understood that he and the Waikato tribes had no title to the land in the King-country (except some small claims at Kawhia), so that he and they were really only living there on sufferance, and through the fact of Ngatimaniapoto being at one time his supporters and also adherents to the King movement. With that support and adherence now withdrawn, it is quite natural that Tawhiao should feel that his mana, so far as that people and their land is concerned, is now a thing of the past. Hence, I think, his removal with his few remaining adherents to another locality. Although, however, he and the main portion of his people have removed to Pukekawa, a few still remain at Whatiwhatihoe to look after those of their dead who are buried there, also their houses and some of their property, and it is understood that some of his people will return there again next season to plant wheat, &c., as, notwithstanding that the land there has been continuously cropped during the last nine years, it would appear not to be by any means worked out, as shown by the splendid crops of wheat and oats that were grown there last season, and that without the aid of any manure. Although Ngatimaniapoto have to all intents and purposes separated themselves from the King party, they have not been altogether unmindful of Tawhiao and the support they gave him in years past when they all made common cause against the pakeha. In putting their land through the Court they have set three blocks (estimated to contain three thousand acres) on one side expressly for Tawhiao and his family, to whom they have been awarded by the Native Land Court. They would not, however, allow the names of any others to be inserted in the orders of Court, thus showing that, whilst they sympathized with Tawhiao himself, they had no sympathy with the rest of the King party as opposed to the Government of New Zealand.

During the past year the Native Land Court presided over by Judge Mair, with Paratene Ngata as Native Assessor, has been sitting almost continuously at Otorohanga, with a result that over 750,000, or more than three-quarters of a million, acres of land within the Rohepotae, or King-country, Block have now been adjudicated upon. Judgment has been given in eighty-two blocks, with areas varying from 1 acre to 100,000 acres; and in the cases of most of these blocks the lists of names of owners have been sent in and finally passed by the Court. They vary in number from one (the lowest) to 991 (the highest). Applications for rehearing for eleven of these blocks have been sent to the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court; but two only have been dealt with to date, leaving nine in an unsettled state. It will thus be seen that the subdivision of the Rohepotae Block is going on apace, and that the titles to the land are quickly being brought into such a state that they can be transferred from the Native owner, who does not as a rule occupy or improve the land, to his European brother, who is waiting to get possession of it for the purposes of settlement.

For several months past surveyors have been at work surveying the blocks as represented by the original awards of the Native Land Court; and already thirteen blocks, representing an area of 283,000 acres, have been completed. But it must not be understood from this that those thirteen blocks are now available for purchase. As a matter of fact, about three or four only are so available at the present time. The surveys, so far as they are finished at present, represent mostly awards of Court that have been made in the early part of the Court's sitting during the last two years; but in many cases the blocks represented by those awards have since been subdivided by further orders of Court, and each further subdivision is represented by a separate set of owners (in some cases as many as eight or ten subdivisions having been made of one block), and it will only be after the surveys of these subdivisions have been completed, and the area of each is known, that they will be in a position to be purchased. It will therefore be seen how necessary it is that not only the outside boundaries of the blocks originally awarded should be surveyed, but so also should the subdivisions—that is, for the purpose of facilitating purchase and the settlement of the country by Europeans. I have already sent you a schedule showing the blocks that have been surveyed, and which are now in a position to be purchased; also showing those which have had the outside boundaries only surveyed, and which require still to have the subdivisions surveyed before they can be dealt with.

The blocks the surveys of which are more or less complete are mostly in the Waipa valley, and extend from the Puniu River (the confiscation-line) to Te Kuiti, the present terminus of the Main Trunk Railway; and in the case of several of the blocks the railway runs through them. Others are more or less adjacent to it. All of them are suitable for settlement, whilst some—notably the Kinohaku East Block—situated as they are in the heart of a limestone country, consist of first-class land that will grow almost anything, although some of them are rather broken, more especially as they get near to or are in the bush. On one of these blocks—viz., Hauturu East—are the celebrated limestone caves which have lately been discovered, descriptions of which have already appeared in the newspapers. These caves are said to surpass in beauty and variety anything of the sort to be seen elsewhere in New Zealand.

Although the Native owners of the Rohepotae blocks are not likely as a whole to take kindly at first to any system of wholesale land-purchase by the Government, there are, however, a con-