

the improvements and lands comprised in the estate. Subsequently Mr. Campbell afforded me every facility for the examination of the property.

The following day, Mr. F. Stephenson Smith, District Surveyor of Amuri, having joined me, we devoted our attention from that date to the 29th to an examination of the run, the objects in view being: first, to estimate the value of the run as a whole; secondly, to ascertain whether it was suitable for subdivision and settlement in the event of the Land-tax Department taking it over. This report is framed with due regard to these two essentials.

Boundaries and Situation.—The Cheviot Estate has an estimated area of 83,604 acres, apparently taken from old maps; but these figures are open to question in consequence of palpable discrepancies between the present courses of the Waiau and Hurunui and those shown on the plans.

Situation.—The run is situated on the south-east corner of the Nelson Land District, and is bounded on the north by the Waiau River; on the east by the sea; on the south by the Hurunui River; and on the west by the Kaiwara Stream, and a right line to the Waiau.

Beyond the western boundary are the Mount Palm, St. Leonard's, and Kaiwara Estates; through which extends from north to south the Lowry Peaks Range.

Access.—The run is about twelve miles square, very compact, and comparatively isolated, being only accessible from the north and west by fords on the formidable Waiau, or on horseback, over the pass of the Lowry Peaks Range. On the south, however, the access is by a fairly-good road from Waipara Railway-station to a bridge over the Hurunui, a distance of about twenty-three miles; thence to the homestead on the Jed Stream is about eleven miles, or thirty-four miles in all. Sea carriage has hitherto been the chief means of communication.

Port Robinson.—The estate possesses in Port Robinson a small natural port, well sheltered except from north-east and easterly winds and seas. This arises from the fact that a headland and two reefs project into the sea, so as to partly enclose and form the port. Here have been erected a slip, a large and well-built storing shed, and a cottage. The port is well equipped with three boats, including a large iron cargo-boat (capable of carrying 60 bales of wool, or 10 tons), worked by a cable and an 18-horse-power engine. The whole export and import trade of the estate is thus amply and efficiently provided for. It is alleged that as many as 1,000 bales of wool have been shipped in one day. The "Wakatu" and similar steamers are said to be best adapted for the trade. No difficulty is usually experienced in obtaining the attendance of steamers, as Cheviot has telegraphic communication. There is reason to believe that the competition between ocean-going vessels has on occasions lowered the freight on large shipments of wool from Cheviot to Europe to the same rate as from Lyttelton. Barring the usual drawbacks and uncertainties attending the transmission of goods and produce by cargo boats, Port Robinson provides effectually and economically for the requirements of Cheviot district.

Roads and Tracks.—The roads and tracts on the estate comprise—

(1.) That from the Hurunui Bridge to the homestead, eleven miles, and thence onward to the Waiau River a further distance of seven miles;

(2.) The road from the homestead *via* the Jed Valley, about seven miles, or, *via* the Hurunui Flats, eleven miles.

These roads have only been formed in places, but slightly metalled here and there, and consequently are only suitable for summer use. The cost of metalling roads to some of the flats and downs will be enhanced from the fact that shingle is not generally available; nevertheless the difficulties on this score are not exceptional.

Owing to the level character of the lands and easy slopes of the hills, unusual facilities are presented for carriage by bullock- and horse-drays over the greater part of the estate—an advantage which tends to saving of time and expense in the erection of fences, and in carrying out other general farmwork.

The distance of the several divisions of the run from the port and railway lines is an important element in considering the capabilities and value of the blocks.

The following table affords some information on the subject:—

Waipara Railway-station to the	Hurunui Bridge ...	...	about 23 miles.
"	"	" Hurunui Flats ...	" 7 "
"	"	" Homestead flats ...	" 34 "
"	"	" Waiau flats ...	" 39 "
Port Robinson to the	Homestead ...	...	" 7 "
"	"	" Homestead flats ...	" 9 "
"	"	" Waiau flats ...	" 12 "
"	"	" Hurunui flats ...	" 7 "
"	"	" Hurunui Bridge ...	" 14 "

The telegraph-line runs along the track from near to the Hurunui Bridge to the post-office and Cheviot homestead. A Postmaster and lineman reside at the station.

Proposed Railway.—Mr. T. M. Foy, of the Public Works Department, explored the country for a railway-route from North Canterbury to Blenheim, and reported on the 2nd June, 1876 (*vide* Appendix to Journals), that the line would start from Waipara, pass through the Omihi flats, over a saddle, into the Waikari, and down that valley to the Hurunui, crossing the last-named river and following it down about nine miles; then turning northerly over a very low saddle the line would pass centrally through Cheviot Estate, crossing the Waiau one mile west of the mouth of the Leader.

But for the bridging of the Hurunui the proposed line should not be costly.

As the subdivision of the intervening country proceeds year by year, it is reasonable to anticipate that a light branch-railway will be projected towards Cheviot. It would only require to be taken as far as the Homestead flats, and would tap and serve the whole of the estate most admirably.