

*Tramway to the Port.*—In the event of Port Robinson sufficing for any possible development of the trade of the district, a tramway might be constructed from the Port to the centre of the estate.

*Character of Country—Seaward Range.*—The north-eastern portion of the estate consists of a chain of hills known as the Seaward Range, comprising about 11,450 acres, which extend from the Waiau to the Jed Stream. This chain of hills varies in height from 500ft. to 1,400ft. above sea-level: the tops are fairly broad and even; the western slopes are steep; towards the eastward the spurs descend and terminate in abrupt faces on the sea-shore, being separated by deep and, in some cases, rough gullies. The formation is sandstone and slate, with a strip of argillaceous limestone. As a rule there is a fair depth of soil on the ridges, but the slopes are more or less rocky or stony. The vegetation consists of tussock and other native grasses, with an occasional admixture of English grasses, with scrub and fern in the gullies, and some bush in the watercourses, but constituting fair and healthy sheep-country. The block is evidently well watered.

*Port Hills.*—In the south-eastern part of the estate are the Port Hills, which front the Jed, the sea, and the Hurunui. The block comprises about 8,174 acres of low hills and downs, ranging from 500ft. to 800ft. above sea-level. The formation is principally limestone and blue clay, with sandstone in places.

The tops of the ridges and spurs are mostly flat or rounded, but are stony on the central area, which is intersected by deep valleys and gullies at the head of the stream which debouches near the mouth of the Jed.

Along the sea, Hurunui, and Jed are numerous flats and table-lands, generally of excellent quality, carrying a splendid growth of English and native grasses; affording good sites for homesteads, and every facility for subdivision and settlement. The central hills comprise fair and good soil, carrying native and English grasses, with fern and scrub in the gullies. The block as a whole is fairly well watered, is well suited in some parts for grazing cattle, and a considerable portion of it could be ploughed: indeed, much has already been done in this respect, and in the laying-down of excellent English grass paddocks.

*Benmore Block.*—The south-western part of the run comprises the Benmore Hills and spurs. The area is about 12,450 acres, the general elevation above the sea-level varies from 400ft. to about 1,600ft.

The hills fall rapidly from the vicinity of Benmore, and merge as a rule into easy slopes or flat and round-topped hills towards the east and north; but fall more rapidly by rocky and stony faces into small flats of good quality on the Hurunui and Kaiwara Streams.

With the exception of a few narrow spurs and steep and rocky gullies of sandstone and slate formations, not exceeding probably 3,000 acres in area, the block is of limestone or papa formation, the soil deep and of good quality, and the pasturage of native and English grasses is generally superior. The Hurunui flats and downs are also generally of good quality and well grassed. Some of the rougher gullies are scrubby in the bottoms and on the sides, and fern grows on the southern faces of the hills.

A large percentage of the whole area is capable of being ploughed. The block is apparently fairly well watered.

The block could be subdivided into large and small farms fronting on the Kaiwara and Hurunui, and on a proposed road along the northern boundary, so as to provide ample homestead sites.

*Wart and Tormore Blocks.*—The whole of the country to the northward of Benmore along the western boundary is comprised in the Wart and Tormore Blocks. The area is about 21,200 acres, and consists of low hills and downs, separated generally by easy-faced gullies or valleys. The Gower and two other large streams, however, divide the table-lands, with the advantage that permanent water will in all probability be retained therein. The formation, with the exception of a small area of sandstone and slate, is of limestone and blue clay (papa).

The soil is deep and rich, a large extent being ploughable, and the growth of native and English grasses excellent. The whole area is well adapted for subdivision and occupation by farmers and graziers.

*Central Plains.*—Between the foregoing hill-blocks are situated the Waiau, Homestead, and Hurunui Flats and contiguous downs, comprising in all about 30,000 acres of arable and semi-agricultural lands, standing about 200ft. above sea-level, and already splendidly grassed. The formation consists partly of blue and sandy clay and yellow sandstone, but principally of shelly limestone. This magnificent tract of country is made up in part of alluvial areas, which were formerly swamps impregnated with washings from the limestone and papa formations. In others the soil appears to be of superior character, resting on a good clay subsoil, whilst over a limited area it is of a more clayey nature, but apparently only requiring to be judiciously worked to prove good cropping-land.

There are also small areas of stony flats and slopes, which, nevertheless, will work in advantageously with the wetter and low-lying lands. An estimated area of about 6,000 acres in the Homestead Block has been laid down in English grasses, furnishing proof, notwithstanding the lack of evidently much-needed drainage, of the splendid qualities and capabilities of that portion of the estate.

Some of the downs and easy slopes towards the Hurunui have produced turnip-crops with alleged satisfactory results.

*Cropping.*—Twelve hundred acres of the Hurunui Flats, low-lying wet land, were under wheat-crops last season, yielding 21 if not 25 bushels to the acre. The terms made with the contractor indicate the high estimation in which the land is held by both him and the proprietor.

This particular land is unfit for cropping until it has been at least partly drained, and would then most probably give good returns.

The contractor has the same land and a paddock in the Homestead Flats under crop again this season. There appears to be no difficulty, save the present bad state of the road, in transporting the wheat to market by way of Port Robinson.