

District of Napier

Encl. 2 in No. 6

ROBERT PARK, ESQ., SURVEYOR, TO THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER

Ahuriri, 7th June, 1851.

SIR,—

Acceding to your request I send you a brief report upon the three blocks of land lately agreed to be purchased by you from the Natives of Ahuriri and others.

The first lying nearest Wellington and called Hapuku's Block, contains nearly 300,000 acres, and is bounded as follows. On the East by the sea, along which it extends from Matahuia the Northernmost Point, to Parimahu the Southernmost Point, a distance estimated at 17 miles in a straight line partly cliff and sandy beach.

There is no harbour but there is a sufficient shelter at Tuingara for vessels; several small ones having anchored there and landed and received goods, as also wool from a Station belonging to Messrs. Northwood and Tiffen close by, on the South from Parimahu to a Stream called _____ in the Ruataniwha plain; the boundary runs in nearly a straight line, a distance of about 23 miles following the line passing over low hills covered principally with fern; on the west, along the said stream called _____ flowing Northwards to the Tukituki river across to the Waipawa River and from thence up a small stream called _____ to the Northern boundary, the whole distance being about 21 miles, and in nearly a straight line—the Streams well defined. This boundary passes through rich grass land and embraces a small portion of the Ruataniwha plain (some 40 miles long by 10 miles wide), a plain which for beauty of position, fertility of soil, mildness of climate and abundance of wood and water, stands unrivalled in New Zealand; and on the North and North East partly by the edge of a swamp and stream as far as Pa Tangata on the Tukituki River, and partly by that river; from thence, upwards, along the Ngakoutawa Stream to a range of hills, along said range for a short distance and then Eastwards to the sea at Matahuia; the whole distance being from 36 to 38 miles.

The block is nearly square and is a most valuable one; beautifully diversified by hill and plain: the soil is generally very rich and is nearly all covered with excellent grass. The Tukituki River which is navigable for canoes in the winter time as far as the Western boundary, runs through the richest parts and there are minor streams; the road from Port Nicholson via Wairarapa will likewise pass through it and every where roads can be made at a moderate expense; there is abundance of good timber (Matai, Kahikatea, Totara, &c.), and although the largest portion is included in the Native reserves, this will be no detriment, as the Natives are willing to sell the wood at a moderate rate. There is also a fine site for a town near Waipukurau, and close to a range of low hills, composed of a shelly limestone adapted for building purposes.

The next, the "Ahuriri Block," is distant from the last about 20 miles, and contains also about 300,000 acres. It is bounded on the East partly by the Waiwhinganga Stream, and partly by the coast, a low shingly spit dividing the harbour from the sea and runs from Petane on the Waiwhinganga to Motuwahou at the entrance of Ahuriri harbour, a distance of about 7 miles. Embracing the harbour, the southern boundary runs across to the Tutaikuri River and continues along it to Owihakou, where it leaves the river to run in nearly a straight line to Waiharakeke at the base of a high mountain range, Kaweka, the whole distance about 35 miles, on the West by Kaweka some 16 miles to Mangatutu on the Mohaka River; and on the North and North-East partly by the Mohaka River, partly by the Native road to Taupo, and partly by the aforesaid Waiwhinganga to Petane, a distance in all of about 32 miles.

This block is very much broken by hills and streams and is principally covered with fern, but wherever the fern has been burned off, or along the footpaths, the grass springs up abundantly, and it only requires sheep and cattle to make it a rich pastoral country; there is little or no wood towards the sea, but inland there are some fine groves of excellent timber.

The most valuable part however of this block is the harbour, consisting of a large sheet of water or lagoon, about five miles long by two wide, indented on the Western shore by a beautiful little bays fit for residences, and should be parcelled off in 10 or 50 acre lots; and on the coast, defended from the sea by a shingly spit; the depth of water nowhere exceeding 9 feet. At the mouth of the lagoon is the harbour proper, being several channels cut into the sea with a depth of from 2 to 2½ fathoms at low water; there is no bar, and it is perfectly safe and easy of access at present for vessels of from 40 to 100 tons; on the North Spit there is room for a small town where the present European houses are.

Reporting on three
blocks of land
Hapuku's, Ahuriri,
and Mohaka.