

LAND FOR LANDLESS NATIVES AT WAIRAURAHIRI.

Department of Lands and Survey, District Office, Invercargill, 13th July, 1903.

Land for Landless Natives, Wairaurahiri.

As requested, and in conformity with the Commissioner's desire, I now forward herewith all the most reliable information obtainable in reference to the block on the east side of the Wairaurahiri River, which will enable a decision to be arrived at.

The tracing shows the block subdivided by Mr. Lilliecrona, but unfortunately he has not left any general report on the country, although he sent in classification-sheets. I have marked all the sections which he valued at 7s. 6d. per acre. He does not mention anything about the moss-covered nature of the country, but nevertheless it is of this nature. Mr. Lilliecrona told me when I visited his camp that at nearly every setting-up of the instrument he had to drive in pegs upon which to place the tripod, so as to afford a steady foundation, and this had to be done solely on account of the mossy carpeting I referred to in my annual report.

Knowing that Mr. Otway, who surveyed the block west of the Wairaurahiri, had a good knowledge of the block under review, I asked him to kindly furnish me with a report, which request he has complied with. I attach copy of same, from which it will be seen that the great portion of the country is quite unsuitable for settlement, or landless-Natives purposes.

In January, 1902, I walked through this block from the coast along centre road-line to Lake Hau-roko, and upon the knowledge then gained my remarks were based which were quoted by you. In this distance there are no doubt small patches of fair land, but undoubtedly the area of such is so infinitesimal that they are not worth consideration. There is also some fair timber in places, but it is of no commercial value owing to the inaccessible nature of the country. The area coloured red is mixed in quality, of a peaty or mossy character in places, but on the whole may be termed fair land; but to the north of this the country is not suitable for settlement or for landless-Natives purposes.

It will now be seen from what I have said, and from the report attached, that apparently an error of judgment has been committed in having the land set aside and surveyed for settlement purposes.

In a few days I will send you a report on the block lately subdivided west of the Wairaurahiri River by Mr. Otway, when I have received his classification-sheets and report.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

JOHN HAY,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

GENERAL REPORT.

Blocks V., IX., XII., and XIII., Rowallan Survey District, being Land set apart for Landless Natives along Eastern Side of Wairaurahiri River.

Block IX.

THIS block has been subdivided into sections varying in extent from 170 acres to 490 acres. The whole is covered with dense forest of a mixed nature, the principal timbers being birch of various kinds, rimu, rata, miro, with a little totara in places. The country is mostly broken, with terraces towards the river. The soil is generally of very poor quality, the only fairly good land being a few patches on the ridges and along the river. The greater portion consists of a dense mass of peat and moss, varying in depth from 1 ft. to 2 ft.

Block XII.

This block has been subdivided into sections of from 140 to 342 acres in extent, and is also covered with dense forest, the principal timbers being those enumerated in Block IX. The land consists of a series of terraces rising from the river towards the centre and falling away towards the east. As in Block IX., the soil is generally of a very poor quality, with patches of good land along the river. The formation is mostly peat and moss, with granite boulders underneath.

Block XIII.

This block has been subdivided into sections varying in area from 104 acres to 330 acres. This land is also forest-clad, but the bush bordering on the coast is of a much lighter nature. The principal timbers are the same as those given for Blocks IX. and XII. The land consists chiefly of terraces rising from the coast northwards, and becomes very broken towards the north-east boundary of sections. The soil is generally of an inferior quality, being similar to that of Blocks IX. and XII., with a few patches of good land immediately near the coast. Formation, peat and moss as before.

Block V.

This block has been roaded, but has not been subdivided. The area is roughly 3,000 acres. The land is covered with dense forest of a similar nature to that described in the subdivided blocks. The land consists of a series of terraces which rise gradually from the river towards the east, attaining an altitude of 1,700 ft., and becoming very broken near the boundary. The soil, like that of the other blocks, is generally very poor in quality, consisting of peat-and-moss formation, with granite boulders beneath. There are a few patches of fairly good land on the lower portions of spurs.