

for Maori occupation. The schedules specify the mode proposed for disposing of the same.

In the Third Schedule are shown the lands, the titles to which have been ascertained, which are proposed or are available for general settlement. The area available for this purpose in the county is limited for the following reasons:—

- (1.) The bulk of the lands suitable and available for general settlement are papatupu—that is, the titles have not been ascertained definitely. We propose to deal specially with these blocks.
- (2.) Some large blocks which might have been dealt with under Part I of “The Native Land Settlement Act, 1907,” have been leased privately by the Maori owners to European tenants, either through their committees, in the case of incorporated lands, or by individual owners signing the instruments of lease.
- (3.) A number of small blocks are suitable for Maori occupation, and, indeed, the owners had arranged to lease the same to some of their number. Leases for these had been partly executed, and in most cases the proposed Maori lessees had entered into occupation and made improvements on the understanding that leases would be issued to them eventually.

Papatupu Lands.

We give a list of these lands in the Fourth Schedule, showing that the total area is 149,285 acres, approximately. A full and detailed statement is given in the schedule of the position of each block. We can, however, only give a tentative opinion about these lands. The Legislature by the Act of 1907 has limited to lands the titles to which have been ascertained the scope of recommendations we may make and which can be given effect to under that Act. The main papatupu blocks lie to the north of the Waiapu River, in the north and north-eastern part of the county. But, even though the title has not been ascertained, considerable improvements have been made on much of this papatupu land. The improvements are set forth in detail in the schedule, together with the stock depasturing on the occupied lands. These people do not seem to have hesitated, of late years at any rate, to enter upon some of their tribal lands and to carry out their methods of farming, which have proved fairly successful on the lands which have passed the Court.

They cannot be blamed for the action they seem to have been forced to take in the year 1894, owing to the indiscriminate purchase by the Native Land Purchase officers of portions of their papakainga blocks, of withdrawing the papatupu lands from the jurisdiction of the Native Land Court. The position can only be retrieved by the prompt settlement of the long-standing disputes as to tribal and other claims by means of the Native Land Court. We are glad to have the assurance of the Native Department that arrangements have been made for the Court to hold a prolonged sitting at different places in the district to deal with these papatupu lands.* The foundation for the inquiry into at least one-half of the papatupu area has been laid by the Block Committees under “The Maori Lands Administration Act, 1900.” They seem to have taken a good deal of evidence, which should narrow the issues down considerably for the decision of the Court. We estimate that when the titles are ascertained one-third at least of these lands will be available for general settlement.

Maori Farming.

In a general review of the position of Native lands in this district we cannot ignore the progress made by the Maoris in utilising their lands according to modern methods. So far as we have proceeded with our duties, this district impresses us the most as to the ability of the Maoris to become sheep-farmers and graziers. The various schedules to this report show that they have cleared of bush and grassed 57,000 acres of land, and that they are possessed of 83,000 sheep and 3,200 head of cattle. From the census returns of 1906 we have ascertained that, in addition, they have 8,200 pigs and many horses. They have fourteen wool-sheds, as well kept as any kept by sheep-farmers in the Dominion. In three sheds up-to-date shearing machinery was installed last season, and we are informed that, owing chiefly

* The Court commenced its sitting on the 13th February.