

of black-birch forest, only fit for pastoral holdings in large-sized blocks. The difficulty in getting homestead-sites would be very great, and much against comfortable settlement of the land. The roading of the block would be most expensive, and the lay of the country is such that the greatest difficulty would be found to connect to any present made road, and also to connect one road with another. Taking the block as a whole, for pastoral settlement purposes the cost of providing access would be so great that if the State was to get its money back the block would have to be acquired at less than 10s. per acre—that is, if the land was to be used for general settlement purposes. Even a large portion of the block is not fit for settlement, being too broken and ridgy, and should only be made a reserve for climatic purposes. There are some patches of fair timber that would be very costly to recover and make available for market, owing to the difficulty of getting the trees to the sawmill. There are deposits of coal on the lower levels, but the dip is the wrong way. This means that pumping would be necessary to work the coal. On the higher levels the seams are rather narrow. There are outcrops of limestone, not now very valuable, as other outcrops in more favourable positions would provide limestone so much cheaper. Taking the property as a whole, it is not one that I would have recommended to be acquired for settlement purposes at more than 10s. per acre, though for State purposes it might have been worth acquiring to preserve the scenic beauties of the river, the preservation of natural flora and fauna, for the mineral deposits of coal. I regret very much that, not having plans and my old notes at hand, I am unable to give as much detail as I would like. The report of a road-exploration that I made gives a good indication of what the roading would be like to tap the block from the present system of roads in the Ohura District. To road the block for holdings of less than 1,000 acres would be exceedingly heavy. In fact, many of the sections would require to be much larger.

I have, &c.,

H. M. SKEET,

Commissioner of Crown Lands.

The Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.

No. 91.

District Lands Office, Invercargill, August, 1911.

SIR,—

Mokau-Mohakatino Block.

With respect to my telegram of even date, I was under the impression that the northern part of the block had been given back to the Natives. By your reply I conclude that the area the Government was to receive was for survey charges, &c. Perhaps you would like some idea of how much very broken country there is in the block. As I have only a very small scale map I can only give an approximate idea. One-half of the block is very broken, ridgy, forest-covered country, with a considerable amount of black-birch in the bush, and this class of land in that part of Taranaki is not very good for settlement. Another portion is only moderate country, and the balance, made up of isolated pieces, can be termed first class. It is most difficult to find any fair-sized piece of land of over 100 acres, except in narrow strips up some of the streams, that could be made fit to plough for cultivation. The road system will be costly. Only few road routes in any way of a practical kind are available. The cost even for bridle-roads will run into many thousands. Water carriage may be used up to Panirau, but then roads to the river and down the river will be required, and they will be costly.

Looking at the block as a whole, I do not think it was one that the State would have easily settled. If the newspaper report of the price given is correct, I think when the block has been settled, and the necessary access provided, and certain reservations made, the people who take up the land will find they have made a very expensive bargain. In this case, if road access to each subdivision by means of a regulation graded road is made compulsory, the syndicate will find there will not be much profit, if any. It is a block of land that there will be no necessity for the State to take roads through, so the whole cost must fall upon the syndicate or settler.

I have, &c.,

H. M. SKEET,

Commissioner of Crown Lands.

The Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.

No. 92.

Department of Lands, Wellington, 6th September, 1911.

The Under-Secretary of Crown Lands, Wellington.

Mokau-Mohakatino Block No. 1

THE following is the position of the survey liens on the above block :—

Block.					Cost of Survey.			Interest.			Total Lien.		
					£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1F	..	..	..	..	587	8	11	195	16	3	783	5	2
1G	..	..	..	..	75	6	2	25	2	0	100	8	2
1H	..	..	..	..	314	4	9	104	14	11	418	19	8
1J	..	..	..	..	125	1	5	41	13	10	166	15	3
Totals	..	..	..	..	1,102	1	3	367	7	0	1,469	8	3