

DISPOSAL OF REMAINING CROWN LANDS.

It is proposed to offer for sale or selection during the current year an area of 124,174 acres. The following are brief descriptions of the principal blocks:—

Tutanu Survey District, Huiaua Block (7,700 acres): Undulating country, covered with mixed bush; formation generally papa and clay; good soil; suitable for sheep and cattle. To be subdivided into five sections, from 900 to 3,000 acres; survey completed; road-access being arranged.

Te Puia and Buckley Townships, Rakauroa and Otoko Villages (224½ acres): Small areas suitable for business or residential sites.

Motu and Ngatapa (101 acres): Mostly in grass; soil fair to good.

Pastoral Runs 11, 13, and 14, Kaweka, Pohui, and Kuripapanga (43,569 acres): The land comprises for the most part open, rugged, and broken country, with patches of stunted black-birch forest in the gullies and on hill-slopes. The soil is of a light pumice character, on slate, rock, sandstone, and in some cases gravel. The exposed surface of the tops of the ridges and spurs are wind-worn and bare of vegetation.

Pastoral Run No. 6 (5,817 acres), Waitara: Authority has been given for this area to be opened as a small grazing-run, and particulars will be forwarded for this purpose.

Patoka (3,659 acres): Open, rugged, and broken country; soil fair.

Tuahu and Waikaremoana (6,000 acres): Mostly high birch-clad country; soil inferior to fair; sandstone formation, well watered. Survey in hand. Adjoins Waipaoa Block, of 12,000 acres, recently acquired but not yet proclaimed.

Waikaremoana (8,568 acres): This block of Crown lands is not included in the total area given above, as it was formerly intended to add it to the forest reserve, but the survey is now being made for subdivision into two small grazing-runs. Particulars for offering will be forwarded early. The country is under heavy forest, undulating and hilly, part mixed bush and scrub, running up into high birch country. The subdivisions have each constructed road-access.

Waihaui Settlement (4,033 acres): Undulating to easy hilly country; soil a light marl on papa formation. Mostly in grass, with patches of light fern and small manuka.

Te Arai Settlement (112 acres): Mostly flat agricultural land of good quality.

Porangahau (1,525 acres): This block is for the most part open country, partly in native and exotic grasses; a considerable amount of scrub is to be found, mostly in the gullies. Soil fair to good.

Otawhao, adjoining Takapau Township (2,373 acres): Mostly in grass. Good dairying country, to be divided into twenty-two sections. Survey well in hand.

Ahuaturanga Block, near Woodville (993 acres): The greater part of this is first-class dairying land, and the balance good sheep-country, mostly in good grass. Divided into twelve farms.

Tahoraite Block (502 acres): Open grass land; soil fair to good. Requires the acquisition of some adjoining blocks to make it suitable for subdivision for permanent tenure. An additional area of 500 acres has been purchased but not proclaimed; the surveyor has been instructed to make the survey. Formerly forest, well grassed, suitable for dairying or mixed farming, near Tahoraite Railway-station; to be subdivided into ten farms. Will be opened for selection for next season's dairying.

Timahanga Block and Omahaki Block (33,310 acres): The greater part of these blocks is undulating country, covered with bracken and patches of manuka and grass; the balance is rough broken country. The formation generally is a light chocolate loam with pumice overlying papa, and decomposed yellow slates with outcrops of limestone. Suitable access and exchanges are being made to enable profitable disposal. At present let for grazing.

Mata, adjoining Te Puia Township (223 acres): Mostly open country; soil fair to good.

Kaiwaka Block (14,033 acres): Undulating broken country, with deep gullies, mostly covered with native and exotic grasses, scrub, and manuka. The soil is for the most part pumice, overlying limestone, and in parts papa formation. Survey well in hand. To be offered early, in six small grazing-runs.

TENURES.

The total number of tenants on the books is 1,926, an increase of seventy over the previous year. The tenures are divided into four distinct classes—*i.e.*, ordinary Crown lands, 893 tenants, holding an area of 501,829 acres 2 roods, and paying an annual rental of £38,729 3s. 2d.; land for settlements, 686 tenants, holding an area of 213,894 acres and 34 perches; annual rental, £70,367 9s. 10d.; national endowments, 109 tenants, holding an area of 205,671 acres 1 rood 21 perches; annual rental, £6,319 6s. 10d.; education endowments, 238 tenants, holding an area of 87,552 acres 2 roods 24 perches; annual rental, £9,567 10s. 2d. As the total area set aside as endowments for primary and secondary education in this district totals 87,670 acres, it will be seen that all but 118 acres are leased. The administration of these leases by the Crown has brought the formerly large arrears of rent into line with ordinary leases.

Of the total area of 13,034 acres offered for selection under the optional system, 7,975 acres 1 rood was selected under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase tenure by twenty-six tenants, and 3,411 acres and 30 perches under renewable lease by six tenants, thereby indicating that the tenure under which freehold can be acquired is the most popular one.

INSPECTIONS, AND RANGERS' REPORTS.

The Crown Lands Ranger for the northern or Poverty Bay portion of the district made 395 inspections of leasehold sections held on different tenures, covering an area of 291,919 acres, and thirty-seven miscellaneous inspections. These figures show a considerable increase in the number of inspections made from last year. The value of improvements required to be done by the tenants was £190,591, whereas the Ranger valued the improvements actually effected at £596,492, and there were only seven defaulters—two for improvements and five for residence.