

“C.” WAIARIKI MAORI LAND DISTRICT.

This Maori Land District extends along the Bay of Plenty from Tauranga to Cape Runaway. On the east it is bounded generally by the watershed between the Bay of Plenty hinterland and the East Coast, Poverty Bay, and Wairoa districts. The Urewera country and East Taupo are included within it. On the west the boundary commences at a point to the west of Tauranga, running thence to Horohoro Mountain and Lake Taupo, and along the eastern shores of that lake.

Several places on the Bay of Plenty coast were the landfalls of the canoes, which brought the ancestors of the Maori tribes from Eastern Polynesia; and the descendants of the crews of those canoes took possession of the coastal areas and gradually extended their domain inland. It has resulted, therefore, in this district that several distinct tribes have established themselves there, a larger number than in any other Maori land district. This factor of tribal diversity must be taken into consideration in regard to the organization of any activity or the execution of any policy relating to Native lands in the district.

Tribal Divisions and Spheres of Occupation.

The following tribal divisions have been formed in the course of time, and spheres of occupation and ownership of land correspond thereto:—

Area.	Tribe.
(1) Tauranga district	Ngai-te-rangi.
(2) Te Puke to Matata, Maketu to Taupo, Matata to Murupara	Te Arawa, Ngati-Manawa, Ngati-Tuwharetoa.
(3) Matata to Opape, and hinterland	Ngatiawa, Tuhoe (Urewera), Whakatohea.
(4) Torere	Ngaitai.
(5) North of Torere to Cape Runaway	Whanau-a-Apanui.

The Ngai-te-rangi of Tauranga are connected with the people of area (3), the descendants of the crew of the Matatua canoe, but they have evolved characteristics, traditions, and a mental outlook of their own, and possess traits which have to be taken into account.

Area (2) should really extend to southern Taupo at Tokaanu, but the latter is officially comprised in the Aotea Maori Land District, although, as will appear later in this statement, it has been found convenient to attach the Tokaanu scheme to the Waiariki district.

The Ngati-Manawa is a small tribe occupying the fringe of the Galatea Block and a portion of Te Whaiti, but formerly it owned the whole of the Kaingaroa Block, and the lands north and south of Murupara, now occupied by the plantations of the State Forest Service. Its affinities are mainly with the Arawa Tribe, and to some extent with Tuhoe.

Ngatiawa, Tuhoe, and Whakatohea are of the Matatua canoe, which landed most of its crew at Whakatane, combined with the earlier Toi-kai-rakau migration. Toi established his pa at Kapute-rangi, above the present Whakatane Township; the site of the pa is included in the purchase of land by the Department from the Hillcrest Syndicate.

The Whanau-a-Apanui are kin to the Matatua and Arawa Tribes, but are tribally and traditionally more nearly related to the Ngati-Porou of the East Coast, with whom they have pursued a common policy in tribal, economic, and social matters.

Special Features.

Much has been learnt in the last generation about the lands of the Taupo, Rotorua, Urewera, and Bay of Plenty districts, which are grouped under the Waiariki Maori Land District. Between Torere and Cape Runaway economical farming has been driven down from the steep hill country to the small disconnected terraces and level areas that fringe the coast-line. Lessees of large hill blocks in that area have thrown up their leases, following the example of Crown tenants in the Waioeka Valley near Opotiki. This happened before the present depression.

The Crown began to purchase Native lands in the Urewera country in 1910. By the year 1920 it had spent £193,076. A special Commission consolidated the Crown purchases during 1921, and defined the interests which remained to the Native non-sellers. The expectation that lands thus acquired by the Crown would be suitable for settlement was doomed to disappointment after one attempt to open up land in the upper Waimana Valley. For all practical purposes the Crown holdings in the Urewera country may be regarded as national reserves for forestry and watershed purposes.

The Opotiki, Whakatane, and Tauranga Tribes met with the same fate as those of Waikato and Taranaki after the Maori wars by the confiscation of their lands. The confiscated territory was estimated to contain 440,000 acres of land. Some areas were returned to sections of the disaffected tribes. Large areas were also confiscated at Tauranga and Te Puke. The aftermath of the Maori wars and of confiscations was felt through two generations following those occasions, and explains much of the difficulty experienced by successive Governments in the adjustments of land titles and the settlement of Native lands in the Bay of Plenty.

Land-sales during three generations further reduced the land holdings of the tribes affected by the confiscations, so that the Whakatohea of Opotiki, the Ngatiawa of Whakatane, and the Ngati-Ranginui and other sub-tribes of Ngai-te-rangi of Tauranga were brought to the verge of landlessness. So long as public works—and it must be remembered that from 1920 onwards there was the greatest activity in the construction of roads and railways in the Bay of Plenty and other parts of the Dominion—offered an avenue of employment, this problem did not obtrude itself. With the tailing-off of public works, the failure of bush farms throughout the district, and the loss of rent revenue the day of