

1875.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT BY INSPECTOR OF SURVEYS ON POSITION AND QUALITY OF LANDS
NORTH OF AUCKLAND, RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY THE GOVERNMENT.*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

The INSPECTOR of SURVEYS to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

(No. 496.)

SIR,—

Inspector of Surveys Office, 16th July, 1875.

The lands in the North which have been recently surveyed by this Department, and of which the greater part has been acquired by the Crown, have proved as a whole, to be of a far better quality than those long acquainted with the Bay of Islands and Mongonui Districts could at all have anticipated.

The whole of these lands, now for the first time systematically explored, lie towards the West Coast; with insignificant exceptions that side of the Island is covered with forests, and its general character is hilly; while the lands on the east side, north of Whangarei, are to a great extent open, and include a large area of easily undulating plains in contact with several excellent harbours. The attention of settlers has therefore been almost confined to this easily accessible part; the only inland settlements are there, the only roads are through it; and from it, the impression of the whole country has been very generally derived. But the character of the land in these two divisions is totally different. The tertiary clays which constitute the greater part of the eastern plains, is hardly anywhere to be seen in the western country, where the volcanic hills have, in most parts, generated an excellent soil. The hills are very generally steep, but a table land elevated nearly 2000 feet, lies between Hokianga and the Wairoa, (Kaipara) which is quite sufficiently level for cultivation, and on which the soil is of superior quality; and in the other Blocks north of Hokianga, there are extensive valleys, with a soil equal to the most favoured parts of the Province.

Still, if these districts could only be opened up by cross roads from the eastern ports, their remoteness and the inconvenience of their access, would be a serious deduction from their value for settlement. But in fact, as the resources of the country are developed, the opposite will come to be the case. These new Blocks lie on a far better line of communication with one another, with Auckland, and with the extreme North, than the Eastern districts. An excellent line of road may be had from Kaihu, on the navigation of the Kaipara, through the fine plateau I have mentioned, inland of the Maunganui Bluff to Hokianga, at Herd's Point; from opposite to that point on the north side of the harbour, an equally good line is available through the heart of the excellent Manga-nui-owai Block; by one of two lines not yet sufficiently explored to decide between them, into the Takahue Valley, which is a branch of the well-known Victoria Valley; and so a very direct and easy communication would be obtained between Auckland and the far North, through the best of the purchased Block. The opening of this inland road, and the Kaipara Railway would undoubtedly divert a considerable part of the large passenger and cattle traffic which now passes by sea; and if any scheme of Public Works for the North should be entertained, these certainly, ought to form a prominent part of it.

I am satisfied that at least one fourth part of the land purchased in the North, is everything that can be desired for settlement in respect of soil, levelness, and accessibility, and that probably one-half of the remainder will gradually become valuable for culture as the ground becomes occupied and opened up, while the remainder will still have a value for the Kauri timber, which chiefly grows on the inferior portions.

Experience has proved that forest land is not ill adapted to the means and the needs of small farmers, and the genial climate of the North will partly alleviate the hardships which the struggling settler has to experience at first.

I append a list of the principal blocks, furnished by Mr. Smith, with remarks on their character and quality.

The Hon. the Native Minister.

I have, &c.,
THEOP. HEALE.