

per head. Of course, when the papatupu lands are investigated the holdings will be greatly increased. There is, however, a great difference between the average holding per head of the Whakatohea Tribe and that of the tribes to the north of them. The former have been in contact with European settlement for a longer period, and lost most of their ancestral lands through confiscation and sales to the Crown. The latter until last year (with the single exception of Whangaparaoa No. 1) had not leased any lands to Europeans. They had sold large areas of their hinterland—Te Kumi, Puketauhinu, Puke-mauri, Kapuarangi, and Whitikau, forming the watershed between the Waiapu and Bay of Plenty lands and the boundary of Waiapu and Opotiki Counties, as well as of the land districts.

Our concluding remarks may be confined to that part of the county north of the Opape Reserve. In no part of the Dominion has so little been done to forward the position of the titles. The proportion of papatupu to other lands is greater than in any other district. The papatupu lands of Waiapu County are nearly as extensive but more advanced, because surveyed and ready for the Court to deal with. Those of Opotiki County have never been surveyed. They require considerable preparation before the titles can be investigated by the Court.

This is a matter for consideration and action by the Native Department. Surveyors are required to make magnetic surveys and prepare sketch-plans. There will then be sufficient work to employ the Court for at least two years, with the prospect of many appeals that will further delay the determination of titles. The Maori claimants have been pressing for these surveys, and are eager for a Court.

At this advanced stage of the history of New Zealand there should not be any such thing as papatupu land. If the energies of the Native Land Court and the resources of the Native Department were directed more to these virgin districts and less to the more settled portions of the North Island, settlement would extend more rapidly and with greater benefits to the Dominion.

The lands are not suitable for close settlement, but they will make healthy sheep-country in runs of from 1,500 to 5,000 acres. The interior is steep and broken, and very high. Along the coast there is some arable land, most of it cultivated by the Maoris. Four large rivers form the main drainage from the watershed ranges. Between, the spurs rise abruptly from the coast to considerable heights, giving the country an uninviting and rugged appearance; but the slopes are warm, the country is fairly dry, it is well timbered, and the soil will carry grass well. In fact, this part of the Bay of Plenty has great possibilities as a pastoral district. It is easily accessible by sea. The coast-line is indented with splendid bays and shipping-ports, from almost any of which produce and stock can be shipped during the greater part of the year.

The tribes owning this territory have asked us to convey to the Government their wish that their lands be included in the Tairawhiti Maori Land District instead of the Waiariki District. They allege that their affinities are more with the Maoris of Gisborne and the East Coast than with those of Whakatane and the Thermal-springs District. They ask that the boundaries between the two Maori land districts be adjusted by swinging the Tairawhiti boundary from Whangaparaoa down to the northern boundary of the Opape Reserve. There seems to be good reason for this request, and we recommend it for favourable consideration.

We have already noted the success of the incorporation system in facilitating the disposal of lands in this district. We wish at the same time to point out that to make this system more satisfactory to the general public the committees of incorporated blocks should be compelled to put up their leases to public auction. In that case the State would have to come to their assistance during the period of preparing the lands for the market, by advancing the cost of the necessary surveys and of perfecting the titles. The amounts advanced could be made a first charge against revenue. At present the Committees are