

- (c.) Useless and expensive surveys will be obviated, because there is now no need to re-establish and redefine the old magnetic surveys. The surveys necessary to complete our scheme will be Land Transfer surveys done once to enable the issue of certificates of title.

In conclusion, we venture the opinion that among the younger Natives of the Urewera country there is a strong and a genuine desire to be put in a position to farm some of their lands. They have been hampered in the past by the unsatisfactory nature of the titles, which, as will have been noted from a perusal of this report, have been in a state of turmoil since 1896, formerly during successive investigations and litigation, and later in the confusion occasioned by the Government purchases. The Urewera Natives were moved to agree to the consolidation proposals chiefly by the consideration that out of the scheme would emerge for the non-sellers defined sections, ready surveyed and accessible by or handy to arterial roads; that these sections would be free of the old-time restrictions, and owned not tribally or by hapus, but by compact families, with eyes looking forward, and whose only link with the past would be that the sections comprise the homes and cultivations of their ancestors.

We have, &c.,
 R. J. KNIGHT.
 H. CARR.
 H. R. H. BALNEAVIS.

MEMORANDUM BY THE HON. A. T. NGATA.

To the Hon. Minister of Lands and the Hon. the Native Minister.

DEAR SIRS,—

I have perused the report on the Urewera consolidation scheme prepared by the departmental officers who were associated with me in the Urewera negotiations, and have much pleasure in certifying that it is a correct statement of the scheme and the proceedings in relation thereto.

I desire to impress on the Government the following matters :—

1. That the execution of the scheme should not be left to the ordinary machinery of the Courts and Departments. I strongly urge that special officers of the Native and the Lands Departments should be detailed to carry out the same, and I know of none better fitted for the work than those who have been engaged on the preparation of the scheme during the last three months. There should be attached to them a surveyor who has a thorough knowledge of handling the location of disputed Native sections, and who would have the necessary tact in dealing with the Natives of the district.

2. The exploration and definition of the Native areas should proceed *pari passu* with that of the Crown awards. It would be a breach of the spirit of the negotiations so successfully conducted if the Crown, on whom the responsibility for surveying and roading has been thrown, were to complete its own titles first and place settlers on the areas awarded to it, leaving Native claims in the air.

3. The concluding remarks of the report dealing with the utilization by the Ureweras of the lands remaining to them cannot be too strongly emphasized. I go further than the officers in urging that the State should inaugurate in this district a special scheme for rendering financial and other assistance to the young Urewera farmers. The human material is good. The men are good bushmen, efficient in all that relates to work in bush country. They require not only financial assistance, but above all business assistance. It would not be sufficient—in fact, it would be risky—merely to lend them money on the security of their lands. There must be business guidance as well to see that the money is applied to the best use to secure the best return.

4. The report is necessarily silent as to any policy for dealing with the areas awarded or to be awarded to the Crown under the scheme. I may in this connection direct your attention to the history of the Waimarino Block, which was purchased by the Ballance Government in 1886. As a purchase of a large compact forest area in the shortest possible time it stands as a record. In some respects it affords a parallel to the Urewera country. Waimarino was over 600,000 acres in extent, situated in the interior, surrounded on all sides, but at a distance, by a fringe of cultivated lands. It was not penetrated by arterial ways except the Wanganui River. It was unexplored territory. The country had then no forestry policy. The Waimarino area was nibbled at from all sides; it was the hinterland of two land districts, the hinterland of many County Councils, a kind of “No-man’s Land.” The demands of settlement forced it and its magnificent timber resources piecemeal into the market. It was not till the completion of the North Island Main Trunk Railway in 1908, twenty-two years after the purchase, that the country realized what a magnificent forest asset it had had and lost.

History repeats itself in some respects in the Urewera country. Once more the fate of a territory of over 600,000 acres of forest land, also hinterland, on the edge of two land districts, and of two Native Land Court districts and two Maori Land Board districts, the converging point of possibly four County Council areas, is in the hands of the Government to make or mar. Is it to be left to the nibbling process, to the varying claims of contending jurisdictions, to a gradual evolution pioneered by the axe and fire? Or shall we have now an illustration on a grand scale of what is meant by a comprehensive scheme of land-settlement? We have or are about to have a properly equipped Forestry Department, with its schemes for demarcation, reservation, and so forth. We have the dearly bought experience of Bay of Plenty farmers in handling bush farms in that district. We have on the East Coast the example of what Maoris can do with their lands if intelligently assisted, financed, and organized. We should be able to benefit by a combination of such talent and experience in the handling of the last important land problem of the North Island.

Yours faithfully,
 A. T. NGATA.