

THAMES AND PIAKO DISTRICTS.

The negotiations during the past year in the Thames District carried on through Messrs. Mackay and Puckey, assisted by Hoterene Taipari, have been mainly directed in closing up transactions entered into in 1872-73. Lands within the proclaimed gold fields, which were included in agreements made between the Natives and the Crown for gold mining purposes, and lands within the same district not subject to gold mining agreements.

The lands acquired and under negotiation in this district on the 30th June, 1874, with the cost and advances, are shown in Parliamentary Paper C. 4, of last year, as under.

For the purchase of 438 acres of the Thames Foreshore, there was paid the sum of £2,941 13s. 6d.; and on other completed transactions over 20 blocks of land, containing \*117,056 acres, payments were made amounting to £17,436 13s. 4d. Besides these purchases, several old claims over the Waitoa and Piako lands were settled, at a cost of £923. This payment extinguished Native claims over 31,230 acres of land.

The incomplete transactions noted in the Return represented 475,005 acres, on which advances had been made to the amount of £27,343 10s. 1d. Included in this area is the Ohinemuri Block of 132,175 acres, since proclaimed a gold field, on which advances have been made by way of purchase of the sum of £12,714 14s. As however much opposition and many difficulties had to be overcome, which would lead to an indefinite delay in opening the district as a gold field, it was deemed advisable in the interests of the public to enter into an agreement with the Native owners to acquire the right of mining for gold and other minerals, besides the right to sell timber and lease lands for agricultural and other purposes. The advances made on account of the purchase are a first charge on the miners' rights, fees, leases, &c., arising within the block. The sum of £1,109 15s. has already been recovered.

The work done in the Thames District during the past year has been the completing the purchase of 9 blocks of land, containing 35,411 acres, the total cost of which has been £4,026 12s. 11d., or 2s. 3¼d. per acre (these 9 blocks have been under negotiation since 1872); also the purchase of 1 block, containing 245 acres, for the sum of £166 14s.

The incomplete transactions to date are the purchases of 30 blocks of land, containing about 456,410 acres (these transactions were commenced in 1872-73). Payments have been made on these blocks to the amount of £30,244 9s. 5d. There are also 14 other blocks of land that have been negotiated for during the past year, estimated to contain 40,251 acres, on which advances have been made to the amount of £1,027 5s. 11d. In the latter area is included the Coromandel Foreshore, not yet surveyed, estimated at 1,400 acres.

In addition to the above purchases, negotiations are advanced for the acquiring of land in the Patetere District, estimated to contain 249,000 acres: on this purchase payments have been made to the amount of £3,916 13s. 4d.

In the Thames and Patetere Districts, the operations during the past year are shown in the form below :—

	LANDS ACQUIRED DURING PAST YEAR.			LANDS AT PRESENT UNDER NEGOTIATION OF PURCHASE.		
	Acreage.		Amount paid.	Acreage.	Amount advanced.	
	A.	R. P.	£ s. d.	Acres.	£ s. d.	
Thames Foreshore ... ..	6	2 10	40 0 0	...	...	
General Lands ... ..	35,650	0 0	4,153 6 11	495,261	31,161 15 4	
Coromandel Foreshore ... ..	...	...	...	1,400	110 0 0	
Patetere Lands ... ..	...	...	...	249,000	3,916 13 4	
Ohinemuri Lands ... ..	...	...	...	...	11,604 19 0	
Totals ... ..	35,656	2 10	4,193 6 11	745,661	46,792 14 4	

\* Including 5,305 acres (£675) since treated as an incomplete transaction.