

that comes out at Ruapehu, and bounded by the bush, as I have marked on the sketch. Bring a Native to Patea—this settlement. This will bring you to the plateau country; then get a guide to the Rangipo track; but make up your mind to camp out one night. When out of the bush, and on to the plain at the base of Ruapehu, and past the swamps at the head of the Hautapu River, you will cross a deep gully leading to the Wangaehu; leave the track there and start off to the right on the grassy downs for a clump of bush which is on the Moroowhango River, where it comes out of a gorge. There is beautiful country farther up the valley, but this will be sufficient to enable you to judge. From thence ascend a spur to a ridge you will have observed bearing to the west, and this will bring you down again on to the track on the plain, where the waters divide between the Wangaehu and the Waikato. From this it is eighteen miles to Rotoaira, down the Rangipo Plain. Thence three days will take you back to Napier by the north track. If you go right through without halting, it will take you seven days; but allow yourself double that time. If you do not care about Rangipo, come to Patea, then north to the place I have described on the Moroowhango, and straight back to the gap, down to Napier. This you can do in five days.

Enclosure 13 in No. 1.

REPORT by Mr. S. LOCKE to the Hon. H. R. RUSSELL and Others.

GENTLEMEN,—

In compliance with your request, I forward a report of what was done by Mr. Hamlin and myself in respect to the preliminary negotiations for lease of certain blocks of land at Patea, Tongariro, and Rotoaira.

Before going further, I wish to state what I understood as the country to be leased, as it has always appeared to me that some misapprehension existed respecting that point. The district described to me at Wellington, and the district which I have always endeavoured to obtain for you—and if circumstances had not prevented I believe I should have succeeded in obtaining—is that portion of the country stretching from Lake Taupo along the east slopes of the Tongariro and Ruapehu Mountains, including the country about Rotoaira, crossing the Onetapu desert to where the West Coast road enters the bush, so as to include the Kariti (Murimotu) Plains, having the Taupo Lake to the north; the Pihanga Mountains, Rotoaira Lake, Tongariro and Ruapehu Mountains, and the forest on the west;—forest to the south, and the boundary to the east, to be taken so as to include all the intervening plains, taking as good a boundary as could possibly be got. I bring this forward for the purpose of stating that I did not understand when I undertook the negotiating of these lands that the Patea proper was included; on the contrary, the portion most pressed on my notice at the time was the land about Rotoaira and the spurs of Tongariro. I was aware at that time that other parties were in treaty for what is known as Patea proper and Opaoko, although I was quite ignorant of the Messrs. Birch's intention of obtaining land in that district. There has always been some confusion about this matter, greatly owing, I believe, to not knowing the country. I remember speaking to Mr. Cox, and, I think, to others, on the subject more than once. After the full and explicit description given by Dr. Hector of the country, I cannot pretend to enlarge upon his report, excepting to say that I think he has somewhat over-estimated the extent, but, as he had instruments, &c., with him, he would be able to ascertain a very near approximate of the contents; and, as far as the capabilities of the district as a sheep country, and whether sheep will thrive there in the winter, can be ascertained by the inspection of the Messrs. Birch's flock in the spring.

I first entered into communication with the owners of the country for the purpose of leasing it, when I went to Rotoaira, in the month of November, 1867, with Mr. Cox and Colonel Whitmore, carrying letters of introduction from His Excellency Sir George Grey. The principal owners were then at the West Coast, and not likely to return for some time—the Natives at the Rotoaira Pa said not until after Christmas. The purpose for which I had come was thoroughly explained to the people present, who stated that at a meeting to be held on the West Coast the arrangements respecting the division, &c., of the lands in the neighbourhood of Tongariro were to be settled, and that after that they would be willing to lease; further, that they did not expect their chiefs back until after Christmas, but that as soon as they returned they promised that I should be informed, which promise I subsequently found they would have kept had I not been back in the district before they had all returned. Ihakara arrived from the West Coast on the same day that I arrived at his pa. (I wish here to state that Mr. Birch passed Rotoaira a few days previous to my arrival there, and on his way to Napier leased a run at Patea from some of the Natives there, which was out of the district for which I then understood I was to treat for.) It was not until my return to Napier that I ascertained that the Messrs. Birch had obtained a run in the Patea country. During the month of December I received letters from Mr. Russell and Colonel Whitmore, requesting me to go to Rotoaira for the purpose of carrying on the negotiations. I replied that I knew that the proper parties to deal with had not arrived, on which Colonel Whitmore desired me to engage Mr. Hamlin at once, and follow after myself. I therefore asked Mr. Hamlin to go and see the Natives, and endeavour to collect them, to commence the preliminary arrangements, &c. Mr. Hamlin accordingly started on the 4th of January, and I followed on the 13th of same month. On my arrival at Pakihiwi, Ihakara's Pa, I met Ihakara, just arrived that day from the West Coast. Ihakara was very indignant that any land had been leased during his absence. I here ascertained that Mr. Hamlin had seen all the Natives of that neighbourhood, and had done all he could to forward the object for which he came, and had gone on to Rotoaira, for which place I at once started. I met Mr. Hamlin near Rotoaira, who informed me that Heteraka and the other owners, at their own request, would come to Ihakara's pa to meet us. I therefore turned back to wait at Ihakara's pa. We waited there to 23rd of January, and as no Natives of note, excepting Karaitiana, appeared, and as it seemed they were not prepared to go fully into the subject,