

arrangements were comparatively intact and showed the strength of the position. This fortified place or pa—Toriata—is situated on a conical hill a little to the south of the ridge of hills between the two branches of the Waikari River, where the stream divides at the southern end of the Pawairoto Hill. The reading of the barometer showed this pa to be about 1,700ft. above sea-level. The ridge of hills already referred to constituted the main line of travel to the eastward. On the top and sides of this ridge large cultivations have formerly existed, and the groves of English fruit-trees, notably apples, which still bear great loads of fruit, show that a large population had at no distant time been settled at this place.

At the Maungapohatu Settlement the north branch of the Waikari divides for the last time, one stream coming from the south-south-east parallel to the range of hills which separates this valley from the Ruatahuna Plain, the other stream drains the country more to the eastward and collects the waters of Maungapohatu and the main range to the south. The Maungapohatu Settlement is situated on the northern bank of the latter stream, and occupies a comparatively small area of level land about 150ft. above the level of the stream. The slopes of the ranges around the settlement are cleared to a large extent for cultivation, and the greater part is now under grass. This large clearing shows that a considerable population had at no distant time been settled here. The area under cultivation is of considerable extent, sufficient for the present number of Natives residing in the settlement, but it forms only a small portion of the cleared land. The soil is a mixture of pumice and calcareous and argillaceous material brought down from the high range to the eastward.

Between the settlement and the foot of the mountain there is a strip of broken country about a mile and a half in breadth, intersected with numerous small streams. At the eastern verge of this, the great vertical precipices rise that form the western face of Maungapohatu Mountain. The mountain itself attains a height approximately of 4,500ft., and constitutes the culminating point of this part of the North Island. It forms part of the main range, which in this part is characterized by the great precipice facing the west already referred to, and is distinguished from the other parts of the main range only by its greater height. The eastern slopes are gradual to a much lower level than the top of the mountain. This is the character of the whole of the main range in this part of the country. On the top of the mountain there are several depressions, one of which retains water and constitutes a small lake.

It may be remarked that the Urewera Natives regard the Maungapohatu Mountain as a sacred place, and have a great objection to its being seen or approached by any Europeans. On its summit is the assigned receptacle of the bones of all the leading men in the different tribes, as in the past it has been of their forefathers. It is also considered the chief residence of their *atuas* or gods. The frequent changes of temperature and degrees of moisture in this part of the country induces a frequency of fogs on the high part of the mountain-range, and hence the Natives aver that by the will of the gods the top of the mountain is shrouded and hidden from the gaze of the intruding pakeha.

The whole of the country, with the exception of the Ruatahuna and Ruatoki Plains, the lower Waimana Valley, and the Native clearings already mentioned, is covered with dense bush, certain areas of which may yet become valuable for sawmilling. A great deal of the bush consists of rimu, black-pine, totara, birch, and other forest-trees of lesser note.

Notwithstanding the strict injunctions we received from the Natives at Waimana before we were allowed to proceed, that we were not to examine any stones in the river-bed, these did not prevent us from having a good view of the country, and of observing the different formations passed through, none of which presented a promising aspect for the discovery of gold. They are formations where gold might be found in small quantities, but we do not anticipate that either alluvial diggings or auriferous lodes will be discovered in the localities we passed through that will give remunerative wages for working. From what we could learn after returning to Whakatane from Maungapohatu, and also from our conversation with the Natives while in the country, the gold-bearing belt lies to the south-west of Maungapohatu, and it is said that near Hapurua-hine rich specimens of auriferous quartz were found in the early days, and gold was also obtained in the Okahu Stream near the track between Ahikereru and Te-Mimi, the Native settlements.

The circumstance which gave rise to the report as to the existence of gold in this locality is as follows: It is said that, when the troops went into this country during the time of the war, on leaving Waikare Moana, they followed for a distance of about eight miles what is indicated on the map as the mail-track, to where it crosses a small gully, and on following this gully up for about three miles they came to a place where the rocks had been laid bare by a slip; some of the men brought away a remarkably rich auriferous quartz specimen from this place; but, upon going back some years afterwards to try and find the spot from which the specimen had been taken, it was found that a large slip had since occurred and had deposited an immense quantity of material over the locality where the stone was supposed to have originally been discovered.

Some Natives assert that alluvial gold and also quartz specimens have been found in the bed of the Okahu Stream, about seven miles from the Ahikereru, on the track towards Ruatahuna and also to Te-Mimi; whether there is any truth in this assertion we cannot say, but should there be any gold found in the country, it is in this direction that the discovery is most likely to be made, as to the east of Maungapohatu the formation is entirely Cretaceous, or Cretaceous-tertiary, in which no auriferous quartz lodes are to be expected.

GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES.

The district to the east and the southern part of the Whakatane watershed was examined and reported on during the year 1887 (see "Geological Reports" 1886-87), and, as described by Mr. McKay, the geology of the contiguous country to the east and south illustrates and explains the mode of the occurrence of the different formations found within the limits presently to be described.