

Claimant.	Work done.	Particulars of Improvements.	Maximum amount allowable by the Rotokare Domain Repeal Act.
P. O'Connor	75 acres bushfelling, subsection 3, Rotokare Domain, £1 5s. per acre (£2 10s. per acre according to limits of Act)	£ s. d. 187 10 0	£ s. d. ..
	Wages, four men, twenty-four days, getting material, and building house (£25, according to Act)	50 0 0	..
	To nine days' pay per man (four men knocked off work at the request of Commissioner of Crown Lands)	12 0 0	..
	86 chains boundary fence at 12s. per chain, as agreed by Minister of Lands	25 16 0	..
			275 6 0
			332 6 0

Mr. O'Connor agreed to this sum (£275 6s.), which was approved and has been paid.

8th March, 1904.

J. MACKENZIE,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 22nd October, 1904.

Memo. for the Clerk, Lands Committee, Parliamentary Buildings.

In connection with the Rotokare cases and the petitions of Messrs. Walsh and O'Shea, by direction of the Hon. the Minister of Lands I enclose an extract from the report by the Chairman of the Scenery Preservation Commission, being the result of an examination made by the Commissioners within the last month. You will notice that the report speaks of the whole country being liable to slips, and this refutes a good deal of the evidence given by Mr. Walsh and others as to the extreme value of the land for farming purposes.

WM. C. KENSINGTON, Under-Secretary.

Commission appointed under "The Scenery Preservation Act, 1903."

The Chairman, Scenery Preservation Commission, New Plymouth.

Hawera, 7th October, 1904.

In accordance with your request, we proceeded to Rotokare Lake *via* Eltham on the 5th instant, and beg to report thereon as follows: Leaving Eltham at 9 a.m. in company with the Mayor and Town Clerk, we proceeded along the Rawhitiroa Road for a distance of some nine miles, all the distance being metalled and in fair order. Reaching the junction of Rotokare Road we left the trap and walked up an old side cutting of papa for about a mile and a quarter, where the boundary of the Domain was entered by a gate. This so-called Rotokare Road is almost impassable even for foot traffic on account of the numerous slips, which have in many places completely obliterated it. Owing to the whole country being liable to slipping, it is not desirable to reconstruct this access, but a good road could be made to within 10 chains of the reserve by following up the bed of the creek on Section 2, as per lithograph herewith. Fully a mile would be practically level, but the remaining 20 chains would be too steep for vehicle traffic. We made inquiries as to other means of access, and found that from Hawera we could drive for some twelve miles (mostly unmetalled) and walk about four miles on a very poor track cut out of papa.

The most noticeable features of the Domain were the dilapidated condition of the fences and gates, the destruction of underscrub by cattle, and the unnamable state of the so-called track leading through the enclosure. The fencing requires immediate attention, as a large proportion of it is in a very rotten condition, and in one place adjoining Section 32 there is no fence whatever. The gate at Section 32 (see tracing) was open, and we drove out four head of cattle. It is evident that adjoining settlers use the reserve for wintering their stock, as the grass is well kept down along the tracks, and everywhere ferns and undergrowth have been recently eaten off. The tracks are in a most deplorable condition, in many places over the boot-tops. This is chiefly due to the tramping of cattle, and to a lesser extent through slips and rotten culverts preventing water getting away. More than one-half of the track is quite overgrown with shrubs, which renders walking almost impossible.

The clearing done last year has, fortunately, not been fired, and, as the larger trees have been left standing and the second growth is quickly growing again, the whole area will in a few years present a very picturesque and unique appearance. It is seldom that so many fine large specimen trees can be seen under such favourable conditions, owing to the absence of natural undergrowth, and we are of opinion that had the clearing been done a little less severely, the felling done would have been of an improving rather than a destructive nature.

The fact is, there is too much dense bush surrounding the shores of the lake, and its beauty can only be seen from two points (A and B, see tracing), where there are slight openings down by the water's edge. Everywhere else is dense undergrowth, and we actually walked along the track for half a mile without getting a glimpse of water, although only a chain or so from its shore.