

Maoris of this county is about 60 acres. The average quality of the land is fair pastoral, according to the reports of the Valuation and the Lands and Survey Departments. The area offered for general settlement* (inclusive of lands under lease or negotiation for lease to Europeans) amounts to nearly one-half of the area inquired into by the Commission. It will probably be found that when the balance—19,000-odd acres—is dealt with the same proportion (one-half) will be offered for European settlement.

The area not dealt with in this county is 19,539 acres 1 rood 21 perches of lands for which there are titles and 5,500 acres papatupu, a total of 25,039 acres 1 rood 21 perches. The Maoris interested did not attend the Whangarei sitting, owing to the weather. They live chiefly at Mangakahia.

The accompanying schedules set forth our recommendations in detail. The following is a summary :—

	A.	R.	P.
Lands leased	4,406	0	2
Lands for Maori occupation—papakaingas, &c.	15,674	0	19
Lands for general settlement—			
1. For leasing	12,131	3	26
2. For sale	966	2	0
	13,098	1	26
Lands not dealt with—			
1. Papatupu (approximate)	5,500	0	0
2. Other lands	19,529	1	21
	25,029	1	21
Total	58,207	3	28

2. HOKIANGA COUNTY.

The total area of Native land in this country is 223,715 acres 1 rood 26 perches, inclusive of 48,804 acres papatupu land, or land the title to which has not been definitely ascertained.

The average quality of these lands is good fair pastoral, and in the valleys very good agricultural land. Te Karae Block (vested in the Tokerau Maori Land Board), portions of Mangamuka East and West, Utakura, Wairere, and Motukiore, Waima South and small blocks near the Waima Settlement, the Whirinaki and Waimamaku Valleys, Whakarapa and part of Waihou Lower, and lands at Whangape are all excellent pastoral and agricultural areas. In fact it may be said generally that the best virgin land north of Auckland is in Hokianga County.

The necessity of cutting out the large areas of milling-timber has in the past and will for some years to come delay the occupation of the Hokianga lands for farming purposes. Formerly the kauri engaged the attention of the timber companies. They have, now that the kauri is practically worked out, devoted themselves to other timber—rimu, white-pine, matai, and so on. In most cases the timber has been acquired on the basis of paying royalty. Options have been secured over a number of blocks by a few companies, which are allowed a fixed period for cutting out the timber. Where the owners have determined to hold and work the land themselves, such land carrying milling-timber, the timber is cut into logs by the more energetic owners and sold to the mills. The vendors generally fail to account to the owners for royalty on timber so sold. Much trouble has arisen in consequence. The hesitation of some of the Hokianga Maoris to agree to an equitable system of dealing with the communal lands, so as to account for the profits, is in our opinion due to this traffic in timber by individual owners. There is no question that the milling-timber must be allowed to be cut off the Native lands of this county before they are given over to the pastoralist. It is an asset too valuable to be wasted. There is no district that has such a splendid water carriage for the conveyance of timber. At the same time we think that the administration of the timber areas so as to secure to the owners the best terms and to the eager settler the least possible delay should be undertaken by a responsible body such as the Board.