

ear is charmed by the note of the korimako, or bell-bird ; now it is the pipiwhararoa, or bronze cuckoo ; or the sweet note of the whitehead, or popokatea ; or the chatter of the parrakeet, or kakariki ; or the harsh cry of the kaka ; now the sweet soft warble of the riroriro, or New Zealand wren ; also the black-headed tit frequently flits across the view ; thrushes and blackbirds have, of course, invaded the domains of these indigenous inhabitants."

Suitableness for Settlement.

On the lower reaches for the Mokau the soil appears to be a combination of alluvial papa, sandstone, and limestone, with occasional outcrops of sandstone, limestone, and papa rock. At the mouth there is a mixture of black sand and gravel on the river-beach and sea-coast. On the upper reaches limestone replaces the papa, and the limestone country is reached about thirty-five miles up. The humid nature of the climate, and the comparatively warm temperature that seems to prevail, serves to produce a dense vegetable growth on the rich soil of the banks. From the mouth as far as the coal-mines (twenty-five miles up) there are few rocks in the channel, but above the mines the river contracts, and rocks are frequently encountered, considerable clearing of the channel and snags, with improvement of the numerous rapids, being urgently required. The valley enclosing the river narrows as one nears the source, but retains its wooded aspect throughout until settlement is reached near Kawakawa, and the surrounding country is undulating and broken, and easily accessible from the river, being well fitted for settlement both on account of its soil and also through the comparative even nature of the country.

On the lower reaches there are occasional areas of fairly flat land, which, when cleared and grassed, would no doubt be suitable for small farms, whilst at the back of many ridges fronting the river are larger areas of undulating land suitable for pastoral purposes, and to such lands means of communication from the river should be carefully preserved. This has been borne in mind when framing the accompanying scenic recommendations, and, in all cases where it seemed advisable, land that is better fitted for settlement than scenery-preservation has been excluded. Only that class of land that cannot be utilised except in large areas, at low rentals and at much expense, has been recommended for reservation, and in these cases the rugged nature of the land and the destruction of its natural covering would occasion for more harm to the river and district than can be counterbalanced by the settlement of a few farmers, who could only obtain meagre returns from their holdings, to give road access to which would require heavy expenditure owing to the steepness of the country ; and a certain detriment to the river would be occasioned by the denudation of the adjacent hills, once the bush-covering is felled, and the ultimate deposit of much of the surface soil in the bed of the river. The reservation of scenic areas will greatly add to the profitable utilisation of all surrounding land which may be more fitted for settlement and capable of supporting a sufficient population. The beauty of the Mokau River banks, and their unique scenery, moreover, render the protection of the valley of inestimable value to the State, both for economic and æsthetic reasons, and, as the land is now valued as low as it is ever likely to be, its purchase would be comparatively cheap at the present time, yielding a rich return in the years to come.

The accompanying plan of proposed reservations, and the photographs illustrating the various parts of the river, serve to more graphically indicate the suggestions contained in this report.

*Around Mokau.**

Before commencing a trip up the river the visitor will be well repaid by inspecting the many places of interest near the Heads. Facing the sea-coast, at the back of the township, is the site of the old Topapahiki Pa of the Ngati-Rakei, the scene of a massacre by Te Rauparaha in the end of 1821. Along the coast, at the base of the cliffs, are numerous caves, from one of which (Te Ana-pato, or the Shattered Cave—but now known as the Ochre Cave) the Maoris were accustomed to scrape a reddish sediment (kokowai, or red ochre) off the walls, using it for colouring canoes, &c. In another cave may be seen specks of mica, mistaken by the Maoris for gold in the early days of gold-discoveries. About a mile south of the Heads is a mussel-reef, the scene of many a severe fight between the Ngati-Tama and the Ngati-Maniapoto Natives. Growing near the Heads are groves of the historical Tainui trees (*Pomaderris apetala*) which are said to have sprung from the rollers, skids, and flooring of the great canoe "Tainui," which brought some of the ancestors of the present Maori race to Kawhia, whence some of them afterwards settled at Tongaporutu, Mokau, and Awakino. It is only near Mokau and Kawhia that the tree grows in New Zealand, it having been discovered by Sir James Hector in 1878. Half a mile from the Heads, and a little off the fairway, is a curiously shaped sandstone rock to which the "Tainui" canoe is supposed to have been moored when the Maoris first came to Mokau. On the river-bank, at the present Maori settlement of Te Kauri, may be seen an old totara-tree trunk, supposed to have drifted from Kawhia, and to have been deposited by an unusually high tide at this place. It was made *tapu*, or sacred, by the Maoris, and has always been regarded with reverence, evil having been said to have happened to any rash person who interfered with it. On a small hill overlooking the township, originally called Puke-kiwi (or Kiwi Hill) and now known as Maungapakeha (or the Stranger's Hill) the early missionaries erected a church, and in the adjoining churchyard are buried Takerei and many hereditary chiefs of Ngati-Rakei and other branches of the Ngati-Maniapoto, amongst them being also the first Native missionary who came to Taranaki. This was Hamuera (or Samuel), a Maori educated by Bishop Williams at the Bay of Islands, who was sent by the Bishop to Mokau, where he did good work, but through domestic unhappiness finally committed suicide, and was buried here by order of the then chief. At the back of this hill may be seen the ruins of an old mill established before

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