

ACQUISITION OF NATIVE LANDS.

Proclamation plans covering some 1,027 acres 2 roods 31·6 perches have been prepared of areas immediately intersecting land disposed of. These Native areas are an impediment to the more successful drainage of the adjoining land, besides being detrimental to the interests of settlers who are anxious to fence and are mulcted in the whole cost of fencing Native boundaries. The intention to take the land has been gazetted. The attached plan shows in solid red colour the lands it is intended to take.

LAND PROPOSED TO BE OPENED.

Regarding land that will be available for selection during the current financial year, it is estimated that about 6,800 acres will probably be sufficiently drained for the purpose. Of this area some 2,000 acres is in the locality of Tahuna, and some 3,000 acres adjoins the Waitoa Estate, and some 1,800 acres (inclusive of proposed acquisitions) adjoins lands already disposed of. Every effort is being made to facilitate opening of same, and the survey of the Waitoa area is well advanced. Drainage operations are also in a forward stage, and all being well the areas will be available before next March. The offering of the above lands, and the areas of Native blocks it is intended to acquire, will to all intents and purposes see the more readily drainable swamp country disposed of, and a period must then expire before other lands are available.

OFFICE.

Both clerical and draughting staffs have been kept very busy during the past year. The drafting branch completed all the plans of Native land, proclamation, road, and other surveys. Three photolithographic tracings were also made in addition to engineering plans and general work.

The local imprest discharged liabilities of contracts, workmen's and survey parties' wages amounting to £25,114 12s. 6d. Some 887 vouchers were certified to for payment through local imprest and Treasury. The number of co-operative and general contracts dealt with was 129.

New quarters were obtained for the Department at Thames during the past year, and are very convenient.

GENERAL.

A glance at the attached plan shows that the scope of operations has very materially altered during the past year, and that every effort is being made to give effect to the Department's desire that all readily available land should be brought to profit as early as possible.

The confidence of yourself expressed as regards the ultimate success of the Hauraki Plains is fully justified at the present stage, and there is no doubt that substantial benefits will accrue to the surrounding district by the settlement of same. Already two large adjoining properties subdivided into small farms are on the market for disposal.

A progressive movement is now on foot amongst settlers to establish the dairy industry, and the use of home separators will probably be the form decided upon.

The staff has to a man taken more than ordinary interest in all operations of the past year, and my thanks are due to them for their loyalty and unremitting attention in all departments.

The accompanying plan shows in distinct colours, &c., the present state of operations, and the reference notes thereon clearly distinguish the various classes of drainage-works, lands disposed of, and future proposals in this connection.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON,

Drainage Engineer.

The Under-Secretary for Lands, Wellington.

ARTESIAN BORE NO. 3 (WAITAKARURU).

Depth in Ft.		Depth in Ft.	
0 to 18	18 blue mud.	273	12 pumice sand.
38	20 white clay, shell.	276	3 mud.
54	16 dark clay with shell.	278	2 sand.
59	5 sand.	281	3 clay.
70	11 peaty.	307	26 pumice sand.
85	15 peaty swamp.	309	2 peaty swamp.
101	16 sandy mud.	313	4 clay.
107	6 peaty swamp.	325	12 pumice sand.
127	20 white clay and sand.	336	11 clay.
141	14 blue clay.	342	6 pumice sand.
166	25 sand.	346	4 pumice clay.
176	10 slatey mud.	348	2 peaty clay.
182	6 peaty sand.	352	4 sand.
202	20 sand.	372	20 rough sand.
205	3 rough sand.	382	10 pumice sand.
215	10 rough shingle.	395	13 blue mud.
221	6 sand.	397	2 sand.
231	10 white clay.	399	2 blue clay.
233	2 swamp.	409	10 blue clay.
234	1 sand.	421	12 sand.
244	10 white clay.	432	11 sand.
247	3 pumice sand.	434	2 clay.
261	14 clay and sand.	450	16 shingle.

Flow, 6,000 gallons per day.