by Parliament in the Native Land Amendment Act, 1913, in regard to Native lands generally. In the Urewera country the then Native Minister, Mr. (now Sir) W. H. Herries, decided to broaden the scope of the purchases, which had hitherto been confined to the Waimana basin, and to conduct them as part of the general Native-land-purchase policy of the Government. The Native Land Purchase Officer, Mr. W. H. Bowler, resumed the Urewera purchases at the beginning of June, 1915. The blocks under purchase numbered forty-four (some of the original blocks having been subdivided), covering a total approximate area of 518,329 acres. For various reasons several blocks, totalling about 130,000 acres, were excluded from the operations, including the Waikaremoana Block.

The progress of the purchases up to the end of July, 1921, may be gauged from the following table :—

	A.	R.	P.
Acquired by Lands Department—			
From June, 1910, to 31st March, 1912	40,795	0	0
Acquired by Native Land Purchase Department—			
From 5th June, 1915, to 31st March, 1916	84,770	0	0
From 1st April, 1916, to 31st March, 1917	56,741	0	0
From 1st April, 1917, to 31st March, 1918	64,303	1	4
From 1st April, 1918, to 31st March, 1919	42,672	2	1
From 1st April, 1919, to 31st March, 1920	29,996	1	15
From 1st April, 1920, to 31st March, 1921	9,404	0	0
From 1st April, 1921, to 31st July, 1921	16,394	0	28
	345,076	1	8

Valued at £193,076 4s. 11d.

At that date, in the forty-four blocks under purchase the Native non-sellers retained 173,252 acres 2 roods 32 perches, valued at £78,479 15s. or approximately one-third, besides holding six large and two small blocks intact.

Parliament had in 1916 (section 4 of the Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act, 1916) made it clear that the old and recent purchases of Urewera lands were legal, and that every individual Native owner "shall be deemed to have and to have had power to sell his interest to the Crown, but to no other person." It became clear during 1918 and 1919 that the Urewera purchases were dragging. The Native Land Purchase Officer combed the district through on successive occasions, with diminishing success. It seemed as if the limit of those willing to sell was nearly reached. There was a strong and insistent demand in the Press and by local bodies in the Bay of Plenty to have the areas purchased by the Crown made available for settlement. It became necessary to concentrate attention on the problem of how best to dissever the Crown from the Native interests without the intrusion of the latter into the Crown's sphere of settlement prejudicing a comprehensive scheme of roading and cutting-up and the reservation of forest and watershed areas. Heroic measures entailing the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of outstanding interests were suggested but could not be entertained. The alternative procedure of a Native Land Court partition defining and locating the proportions in each block bought by the Crown and retained by non-sellers did not appear to be satisfactory either for the Crown or for the non-sellers. In not one of the forty-four blocks under purchase had the Native interests been wholly acquired. But the chief stumbling-block was the fact that in order to make such partition orders effective and registrable it was necessary to undertake a comprehensive and very expensive survey of the whole territory. There was no guarantee that the areas awarded to the Crown would conform to any comprehensive settlement or roading scheme, or that the Court would be guided by settlement conditions. On the other hand, the Court was more likely to be bound to respect the Native occupations and clearings and to make these the nuclei of Native sections, irrespective of whether their locations fitted in or interfered with the roading and cutting-up of the Crown awards. The Crown's experience in the King-country under somewhat similar conditions was not to be lightly repeated.

The obvious solution, provided that it did not occupy too much time, was to arrange with the Native non-sellers a scheme that would consolidate the interests acquired by the Crown and those of the non-sellers. The position of the latter was indeed worse than that of the Crown. Their interests were scattered over a huge territory in many different blocks, without any hope under existing law of their ever being brought together into compact areas. Exchanges among themselves would be too costly even if it were practicable to comply with the requirements of the law, which seemed very doubtful. It was as much to their interest as to that of the Crown that a consolidation scheme should be carried out affecting the whole territory. Consolidation of interests as a remedy was suggested to the Native Minister, the Hon. Sir W. H. Herries, during the 1918 session, but, while he approved of the suggestion if the Natives were willing to effect the exchanges, "he did not think that the time was ripe for the Government to start cutting-out in the Urewera country." There was still a possibility of acquiring more shares from Natives willing to sell, and this opinion was justified by the fact that a further 60,000 acres were bought before the consolidation scheme was actually undertaken. But during 1919 and 1920 consolidation as a solution of the Urewera problem was constantly in the official mind. It was approved by the Minister of Lands (Hon. Mr. Guthrie) and officers of his Department. The *Kahiti* (*New Zealand Gazette*) of the 20th November, 1919, published a list of non-sellers in the Urewera district, giving the amounts to which they were entitled and the blocks in which they were interested. Early this year the Natives adopted the suggestion, and made strong representations, first to the parliamentary party which visited the Bay of Plenty and East Coast districts, and later to yourselves when you visited Ruatoki in May last. It was at the conference held by you with the Natives during May of this year that it was definitely decided to proceed with a consolidation scheme.