

CHAPTER 12

HOROWHENUA COUNTY 1885 TO 1970

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1886, of the estimated 400,000 or more acres that lay between Wainui in the south and the Manawatu River in the north, some 184,000 acres remained in Maori lands: 1862 acres on customary titles; another 2800 acres as reserves; and 179,055 acres on land court certificates of title.¹ The bulk of this land was located in about 70 named blocks. Around 25 of these blocks were 1000 acres or more in area. The largest, Horowhenua, contained 52,000 acres.

Twenty years later, in 1906, the Legislative Council requested information to be tabled on the amount of land still in Maori hands. Among the detail sought was a general description of all blocks of 1000 acres or over. When this information was produced, only 12 blocks of the required size could be located between Wainui and the Manawatu.² These blocks containing just over 33,000 acres. This, of course, was not all the land in the Horowhenua County district still in Maori hands. In the preceding years much of the land had been subdivided; this process, if the subdivision of Ngarara is any guide, produced many owners and many relatively small plots, of tens or hundreds of acres. Only rarely did one of these subdivisions exceed the 1000-acre benchmark used to prepare the Legislative Council return of 1906. Some of this subdivided land had then been purchased, if not by the Crown then by the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company or private individuals. The amounts purchased by the Crown, and by the railway company, are more or less known; the amount of land purchased directly, by way of private treaty, is unknown, but even the most cursory examination of the numerous *Gazette* entries dealing with land transfers along the Kapiti Coast indicates that private sales, within the framework of the law relating to the purchase of Maori land, became, from the late 1880s, an increasingly important avenue of land alienation.

Evidence given to the Railways Commission at the beginning of the 1880s showed that the major Crown land purchases of the 1870s had been largely confined to the bush and hilly eastern side of the district. The flat coastal lands remained, by and large, in Maori hands, although the Crown was said to have liens over some of it, and other areas were said to be under negotiation. In 1880, however, Richard Gill seemed quite pessimistic that any immediate or extensive acquisitions would be made by the Crown along the coastal plains.

1. 'Lands Possessed by Maoris, North Island', AJHR, 1886, G-15, pp 1, 11, 13

2. 'Acreage of Unproductive Native Land in North Island', JALC, 1906, no 5, p 20

According to the 1881 census, the European population was 417, and of this number 248 (around 60 percent) were located at Otaki. The other 40 percent were scattered in small handfults up and down the coast. Some lived on land privately purchased, or on the few areas that had been purchased by the Crown; others, perhaps the majority, occupied leasehold land. Arguably, two things explained why the European population numbered only a few hundred at the beginning of the 1880s. One was that the Crown had little land suitable for European settlement available. The other was the lack of a good system of transport. Until the late 1870s, vehicular transport, in the form of coaches and wagons, traversed the coast along the beach, turning inland in the vicinity of the major rivers to seek safe fording places. Those of foot, or horseback, followed the same route. The alternative to the beach 'road' was sea travel, via small ships. These vessels were able to drop passengers and cargo off at various points on the coast, depending on the weather, but often seem to have been used to bypass the district, travelling from Wanganui, or the Manawatu, to Wellington and back.

12.2 THE WELLINGTON–MANAWATU RAILWAY

The first road through the interior, track might be a better description, was constructed in the late 1870s. It appears to have been associated in some way with plans for a railway line between Wellington and the Manawatu. Construction of the Wellington–Johnsonville section of this line began in 1879, but the Hall Government stopped the work, and appointed a Royal Commission (1880) to investigate all railway lines in the country either being constructed or proposed. The Wellington–Manawatu line was among the schemes that the commission recommended against, one of the main grounds for this veto being that too much of the land to be traversed remained in Maori hands.³

3. 'Report of Railway Commission', AJHR, 1880, E-3, p ix

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

Business and commercial interests in Wellington approached the Government, and while failing to overturn the decision that had been made, did receive offers of material support, and a promise of suitable legislation, should a private company be formed to construct and operate a Wellington–Manawatu railway. The Railways Construction and Land Act 1881 gave authority for the construction of railways by joint stock companies, and allowed the Government to make grants of Crown land to offset the cost. While the Bill was being passed through Parliament the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company came into existence. In 1882, the company and the Government agreed, under the terms of the 1881 legislation, that the company, for its part, would complete a line between Wellington and the Manawatu within five years. In return, the Government would transfer to the company 210,500 acres of Crown land, the bulk of it lying between Wainui and the Manawatu.⁴ Construction began immediately, from both the north and the south, and the final spike was driven on 3 November 1886, at Otaihanga, just south of the Waikanae River, six months ahead of schedule. Regular service began on 1 December 1886, the first train reputedly carrying nearly 600 passengers. The trip from the Manawatu to Wellington, took 4½ hours. The Longburn to Otaki section of the line had been opened in August 1886, and a reporter who made the trip commented on the bush that stretched away on both sides of the line, going on to predict that:

4. 'Contract Entered into Between Her Majesty the Queen and the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company Ltd', AJHR, 1882, D-7

Wellington

a very short time will work wonders and that at no distant date the site of the forest will be converted into rich fields and smiling homesteads whose produce will find a profitable market in Wellington by means of this railway line.⁵

Kemp, at Horowhenua, and Parata, at Waikanae, had been enthusiastic supporters of the railway, and both had persuaded their tribes to donate to the company the land in their districts over which the tracks were laid. By the time the line was completed, however, Maori support for the railway may have diminished. Swabey quotes a *Feilding Star* report that Maori were conspicuous by their absence at the ceremonies associated with the driving of the last spike, where both the Premier, Sir Robert Stout, and the Governor, Sir William Jervois, were present, among with many of the leading citizens of both Palmerston North and Wellington.⁶ According to Swabey, there were 1000 spectators, undoubtedly the largest gathering of Pakeha ever witnessed in the district.

It would be hard to overestimate the significance of the coming of the railway. Adkin, no doubt thinking of the Levins and Shannons, noted that the practice of assigning Maori names to new localities along the coast virtually ceased in the late 1880s.⁷ If true, the reason for this seems clear enough – the railway facilitated European population growth on a scale that quickly ended the numerical dominance of the Maori along the west coast. The precondition for this population growth was of course the availability of land – not so much the land Booth had acquired during the 1870s, thousands of acres of which had been passed over to the Railway Company, but the land the company purchased directly after 1882, and the land the

5. B Swabey, 'The Opening of the Horowhenua and Manawatu Districts: The Wellington–Manawatu Railway Line', *Otaki Historical Journal*, no 18, 1985, p 10

6. Ibid, p 8

7. G L Adkin, *Horowhenua: Its Maori Place-Names and Their Topographic and Historical Background*, Wellington,

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

Government obtained in the mid-1880s and later at Horowhenua and Ngarara. Moreover, as the European population began to burgeon along the coast, the demand for land increased, and direct purchases by newcomers or old hands, private dealings, became the most common form or method of alienation. Ngarara and Kukutauaki were passing away: Horowhenua County was rapidly being erected in their place.

12.3 POPULATION CHANGES 1881 TO 1936

There is no reason to doubt the essential accuracy of the 1881 census data as it pertains to the European population. The figures provided for the Maori population, on the other hand, seem quite dubious: the Muaupoko, for example, were located, quite wrongly, at Otaki, and said to number only 81.⁸ McDonald, however, reported that the Muaupoko (at Horowhenua) were several hundred strong in 1879, only two years earlier.⁹ Nineteenth-century Maori were mobile, moving from one district or locality to another, and they were possibly disinclined to cooperate with the census takers as well: both circumstances could skew census counts, invariably in the direction of underestimation. In this case, it seems safe to assume that in 1881 the Maori population along the west coast was nearer 1000 than the 613 reported by the census report. If so, the Maori population was at least twice as large as the European population. Certainly, if we take the 1881 census figures at face value, the 248 Europeans at Otaki were greatly outnumbered by the 455 Ngati Raukawa reported to be residence in and around that settlement.

Successive censuses seem to show that the Maori population along the coast grew steadily during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, although some of the reported increase may have been the result of better enumeration. There

8. 'Census of the Population of New Zealand, 1881', p 309

9. E O'Donnell, *Te Hekenga: Early Days in Horowhenua; Being the Reminiscences of Mr Rod McDonald*, Palmerston North, Bennett and Co, 1929, p 161

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

is no data on Maori migration either into or away from the west coast districts, but net outward flow seems the more probable. The 1911 census reported a Maori population of 1295; if the 1881 census figure of 613 is correct then the Maori population doubled over the 30 years in question.¹⁰ If, however, the 1881 figure was an underestimation, and that does seem quite probable, then the rate of Maori population growth was correspondingly slower. It is even possible, depending on the size of the correction made to the 1881 figure, to suggest that the Maori population was static or even in decline during the period 1881 to 1911. Certainly there was no growth in the Maori population between 1911 (1295) and 1926 (1290), although the Maori population did grow by about 25 percent between 1926 and 1936.

There is no uncertainty, on the other hand, about the growth rate, or the direction of growth, of the European population: the 400 recorded in 1881 had by 1911 grown to over 7500. By 1936, this 7500 had grown by 40 percent (11,045).¹¹ In 1881 the European population had been at best half the size of the Maori population; by 1911 it was six times larger.

12.4 LIVESTOCK AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

10. 'Census of the Population of New Zealand, 1911', appendix a, p v

11. 'Population Census, 1936', vol 1, p 14

One consequence of the growth of the European population was, predicably enough, a great increase in all forms of agricultural and livestock production along the west coast. One would have anticipated that the production and livestock data would, at the very least, track along the same lines as the population breakdown (in 1911, 14 percent Maori; 86 percent European). This, as it happens, is broadly true as far as agricultural activity is concerned. The situation with respect to pastoralism, however, was far different.

In 1885 around 30 Maori were listed in the sheep returns as having flocks in the Horowhenua district, totalling altogether 4000 head.¹² The McDonalds were the only Europeans in the district, but their flocks, reported to number 7500 in total, made up around two thirds of the sheep in and around Horowhenua. The number of Maori owners fell by one or two between 1885 and 1895.¹³ Between 1895 and 1900, however, the number was halved: from 26 to 13.¹⁴ Between 1900 and 1905 it was halved again: from 13 to six.¹⁵ By the 1920s there seemed to have been only two Maori running sheep at Horowhenua.¹⁶ The decline in Maori sheep numbers was less dramatic, which suggests that it was the owners with the smaller flocks who abandoned pastoralism first. None the less, while Maori-owned sheep had numbered between 3000 and 4000 around the turn of the century, by 1925 there were only 700 to be found in the Horowhenua locality.¹⁷ But pastoralism had not ceased to be an

12. 'Annual Sheep Returns', AJHR, 1885, H-8, pp 20–22

13. 'Annual Sheep Returns', AJHR, 1895, H-23, pp 52–53

14. 'Annual Sheep Returns', AJHR, 1900, H-23, pp 60–61

15. 'Annual Sheep Returns', AJHR, 1905, H-23, pp 61–62

16. 'Annual Sheep Returns', AJHR, 1925, H-23B, pp 73–74

17. *Ibid*, p 52

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

important activity at Horowhenua. Indeed, it had become more important year by year. Thus while Maori-owned sheep totalled 700 in 1925, the total number of sheep in the locality was over 26,000. In 1885 there had been 30 individuals running sheep in the Horowhenua district, only one of whom was European. By 1900, two-thirds of the sheep owners were Europeans, and by the 1920s only two of the 38 or 39 sheep farmers reported in the Horowhenua locality were Maori. The turning point, as far as the number of owners is concerned, occurred between 1895 and 1900.

In the south, at Waikanae, the same pattern is apparent. According to the sheep returns, there were no Europeans running sheep in that district in 1885. By 1905 there were no Maori sheep owners reported in the district. Yet sheep numbers, which had varied between 2500 to 3000 between 1885 and 1900 doubled in the five years beginning in 1900. By 1930, there were close to 14,000 sheep in and around Waikanae.

By 1910, along the west coast between Waikanae and the Manawatu, in the statistical area known as Horowhenua County, there were 167,935 sheep in total.¹⁸ Of this number, 8000, less than 5 percent, were owned by Maori. In the same district in 1911 there were 25,000 cattle, of which 1100, again less than 5 percent, were owned by Maori. The figures for sown grasses, 124,215 acres in total, break down in the same way: 94 percent European; 6 percent Maori.

Wellington

For reasons that are not entirely clear, pastoralism ceased to be an activity with a significant Maori involvement just before or just after the turn of the century, about the time that European names began to multiply on the lists of sheep owners, and the sheep population along the west coast began to grow rapidly.

18. 'Statistics of New Zealand, 1910', p 406

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

The figures for agricultural and horticultural activity tell a different story. In 1911, of the approximately 5299 acres of land being cropped or used as orchards, 602 acres (around 11 percent) was Maori production.¹⁹ Thus while the Maori population (in that year 14 percent of the total) owned only about 5 percent of the livestock, they produced about 11 percent of the agricultural outputs. It is certain that Maori owned more land in Horowhenua County in 1910 to 1911 than they used themselves; it was apparently not uncommon for European farmers to lease Maori land for pasture, for example, and there was in fact a long history along the west coast of Maori land being leased to Europeans rather than being farmed or used as grazing land by its owners. But how much of the European pastoral industry in 1911 was based on Maori leasehold land, and the extent of the rental income, is impossible to say. Nor is it possible to say how much of the estimated 184,000 acres of Maori land in 1886 still remained in Maori hands in 1911, let alone in subsequent years. But some of the areas where land was purchased or sold during and after the mid-1880s are known, and so too are some of the reasons why certain areas of land were acquired by the Crown.

19. *Ibid*, p 413

12.5 HOROWHENUA ACQUISITIONS 1886 TO 1929

In 1886 the Crown purchased an area of 4000 acres to the east of Lake Horowhenua, to be the site of the township of Levin. Kemp had wanted the town to be a Maori–Pakeha community, and he had made several stipulations concerning the development before he had agreed in principle to the sale.²⁰ The Government, however, had little commitment to Kemp’s vision, and in the end his financial embarrassment was such that he had to accept the Government’s final conditions, and conclude the sale.

Two other parts of Horowhenua passed out of Maori hands in 1886. Block 1 was a long strip running roughly north and south. Containing 76 acres, it was given to the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company, as a right of way. Block 10 was an area of 800 acres, given to Kemp to enable him to clear his legal debts. It passed into the hands of Kemp’s lawyer, Sievwright. These three transactions: the township, the railway, and the Sievwright block, left some 47,000 acres in Maori hands.

20. Horowhenua Commission, AJHR, 1896, G-2, p 296

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

The next significant sale was the 1500-acre State farm block in October 1893.²¹ During the negotiations over the purchase of the Levin township block the Government had taken advantage of Kemp's financial difficulties to get the terms it wanted, but there seems to be little doubt about the legality of the sale. The State farm block purchase on the other hand, appears to have been a dubious transaction from beginning to end. At the time the offer of the land was made the Government had prior knowledge, or at the very least reason to suspect, that the land in question was part of a trust block, and that the vendor, Warena Hunia, had no right to sell the land without the consent of the other owners. Indeed, the Government Minister concerned, McKenzie, had promised Parliament in August 1893:

they would take very good care, before a purchase was made, or before any money was paid over, that the interests of the beneficiaries should be protected, and that they should get the proper value for this land.²²

Despite this assurance, the purchase went ahead. When a Muaupoko deputation meet the premier, Seddon, in early 1894 to protest the transaction, he adopted a dogmatic and threatening attitude.²³ These bullying tactics did not succeed. Kemp's lawyer, W B Edwards, took the matter to the Supreme Court. He needed Government documents concerning the sale to prepare his case. Haselden, Under-Secretary, Department of Justice, was uncooperative and tardy in providing the

21. Horowhenua Commission, AJHR, 1896, G-2, exhibit c, p 286

22. McKenzie, 4 August 1893, NZPD, vol 80, p 461

23. Horowhenua Commission, AJHR, 1896, G-2, exhibit v, pp 311–314

Wellington

necessary access, perhaps to the point of being obstructive.²⁴ None the less, Edwards won the case, and the matter of the State farm block purchase was set aside for consideration by the Horowhenua Commission.

The commissioners found that the Crown had purchased the State farm block, knowing when it did so that it was trust property.²⁵ But no rebuke was issued, nor was any recommendation made that the land be returned. Instead, the commission suggested a formula that could be used to validate the purchase, and this was put into effect by the Horowhenua Block Act 1896. From one perspective, this legislation provided for the compulsory completion of the State farm block purchase: from another it simply accorded Kawana Hunia the same degree of consideration with respect to Horowhenua land that had been shown to Kemp. But whether legitimised, or merely legalised, the effect, in either case, was the same. The State farm block became Crown land.

The Horowhenua Commission had also recommended that block 12 be purchased as well, and this transaction was effected during 1899. It had been determined that the costs incurred by the Horowhenua Commission were to be a charge against the land, and possibly block 12, mostly rough bush country with few inhabitants, was considered to be the most suitable land for this purpose. Another 12,000 acres was added to the Crown's Horowhenua estate.

24. Edwards to Haselden, many dates 1894, MA series 75/15, NA Wellington

25. Horowhenua Commission, AJHR, 1896, G-2, p 12

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

In the same year (1899) the Government also purchased block 6, containing 4363 acres, bringing Crown purchases in the Horowhenua block during the 1890s to 19,000 acres. After the turn of the century, the Crown continued to acquire land from time to time: 1035 acres in 1900 (Horowhenua 3E 5, Horowhenua 6A, Horowhenua 6B, Horowhenua 6C); two sections on the lake shore (37 and part 38) in Horowhenua 11B, totalling 13 acres in 1907; 101 acres (Horowhenua 7A) in 1908; 1088 acres (Horowhenua 11B42C1) in 1927; a small area of less than an acre (part Horowhenua 9A2) in 1929.²⁶ Other portions of Horowhenua were considered for purchase from time to time as well. For example, Horowhenua 3C no 2 was partitioned in 1909 into 3C 2A and 3C 2B. In the late 1940s the Crown offered to purchase a 25-acre portion of 3C 2A; the elderly owner was represented during the negotiation by her son. He suggested that the Crown should purchase the whole of the block. The Department of Land and Surveys was not interested in buying to that extent, and talks lapsed.²⁷

26. 'Crown Purchase Deeds Index Wellington Province', Wellington, Department of Survey and Land Information, not dated

27. Under-Secretary, Department of Lands and Survey, to Under-Secretary, Department of Maori Affairs, 27 January 1948, MA series 1, 5/5/47 NA Wellington

12.6 OTHER CROWN ACQUISITIONS 1891 TO 1959

In the south, at Ngarara, Crown purchases totalling nearly 9000 acres (Ngarara West C, sections 24 to 39; Ngarara West C, part section 41) were made during 1891.²⁸ There seems to have been few sales of any significance size after this date, and there is at least one example of land being offered for sale, but the Government being unwilling to buy. In 1925 Nora Reilly offered 25 acres of Ngarara West C to the Government.²⁹ R Heaton Rhodes, Commissioner of State Forests, replied that there were no funds available for purchase, and he referred Mrs Reilly to the Scenic Preservation Commission.³⁰ There is nothing to indicate that Mrs Reilly took this advice, but if she did, the Scenic Preservation Commission turned her down as well. The owners of Muaupoko A no 2, section 2, subdivision 1, had better luck when they offered 136 acres to the Crown in 1959. This land was seen as a valuable addition to the Paraparaumu scenic reserve, and was quickly snapped up.³¹

28. *New Zealand Gazette*, no 72, 15 September 1892, p 1274

29. Reilly to Coates, 28 June 1925, Forestry (F) series 1, 9/3/6, NA Wellington

30. Heaton Rhodes to Reilly, 11 July 1925, Forestry (F) series 1, 9/3/6, NA Wellington

31. Secretary of Maori Affairs to Minister of Maori Affairs, 9 April 1959, MA series 1, 5/5/39 NA Wellington

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

The Paraparaumu scenic reserve had been established in 1906, with the taking of 185 acres in Ngarara West C, subdivision 7, the Maori owners being given £300 by way of compensation. The compensation was determined by the Native Land Court. The decision to take the land was at the recommendation of the Scenery Preservation Commission, an advisory body set by the Scenery Preservation Act 1903.³² This legislation provided that Maori, Crown, or private land might be taken permanently, in order to preserve any areas of scenic, thermal, or historic importance. In 1906 the Commission established by this legislation had its eye on another 1100 acres of land along the west coast: 950 acres in Ngarara; 150 acres along the shores of Lake Horowhenua.³³ None of these proposals eventuated; the plan to take land around Lake Horowhenua was aborted when it was discovered that the door at Horowhenua had been locked by the Horowhenua Lake Act 1905. It may be that the Ngarara block was the only land along the west coast acquired under the terms of the Scenery Preservation Act 1903; if so, this would seem to be a somewhat anomalous situation, given the extent to which this legislation was used in other parts of the county. The Crown could, of course, pass special legislation to much the same effect: the Kapiti Island Public Reserve Act 1897, for example, or the Horowhenua Lake Act 1905. It also had, in the various public works acts, legislation that could justify the taking of land for a variety of purposes.

32. *New Zealand Gazette*, no 13, 15 February 1906, p 536

33. 'Department of Lands, Scenery Preservation', AJHR, 1906, C-6, pp 3, 6 (21), 11 (201)

12.7 PUBLIC WORKS

The necessity to extend or improve the roading system was the most common reason for the exercise of the power of compulsion provided by the Public Works Act, but it was not the only one. The need to establish gravel pits, see to river protection, or provide public buildings were among other reasons given for the taking of land. Generally, the areas in question were small, and often the only information available is the *Gazette* notice, detailing the land being taken and the purpose. If the amount of compensation could not be agreed between the owners and the Crown, then the minute books of the Maori Land Court may yield further information. If there were firm resistance on the part of the owner or owners, or some other kind of difficulty, there may be a file as well.

For example, in the 1920s, land for roading was taken from two Waikanae blocks, Ngarara West A3C and Ngarara A32C2. There was some doubts as to the amount of compensation that should to be paid, which had led to delay in finalising the matter. Eventually a valuer, R A Fougere, was commissioned to inspect the blocks and prepare reports. In these documents Fougere meticulously lists the factors that had to be considered when making a case for compensation. His main conclusion was that the road works had enhanced, rather than detracted from, the value of the land, and

his recommendation, which was accepted, was that nominal compensation, of £75 in total, should be paid.³⁴

In 1921, to give another example, the Crown gazetted the intention of taking an acre of Muhunua 1B2B, for the purpose of building a post office. Muhunua 1B2B was a block of 500 acres. It belonged to Hemi Ropata Te Ao, and had been leased to a Pakeha farmer. Apparently Te Ao had originally offered to sell the acre in question, but had then withdrawn the offer before the purchase could be made. When the Crown advised him that it intended to acquire the land anyway, Te Ao objected, on the ground that removing the acre in question would ruin the block. He offered land he owned on the other side of the road.³⁵

34. Fougere to Department of Maori Affairs, 25 November 1925, MA series 1, 54/19/29 NA Wellington

35. Harper and Atmore to Minister of Public Works, 9 June 1921, Public Works (W) series 1, 20/865, NA Wellington

Wellington

The Chief Postmaster inspected the two sites, and reported that he preferred the original location. It was sunnier, while the alternative site was low-lying and would require filling before it could be built on. None of the land in question was suitable for agriculture. He described it as third-grade grazing land. For this reason he felt that the suggestion that the larger block would be depreciated in value if the one acre section were to be cut out of it need not be given serious consideration. In addition, the land had been leased out for 21 years, and the leaseholder had no objection to the land being taken.³⁶

The official verdict was that Te Ao's objection was not well-grounded, and that any loss sustained could be met by way of compensation. Te Ao was informed accordingly.³⁷ The required proclamation was made, and the matter of compensation referred to the Native Land Court.³⁸

In November G Halliday, a land purchase officer, wrote to Te Ao to tell him that he (Halliday) would be attending the court sitting at Levin, to ask the judge to settle the compensation. He asked if he could meet with Hemi beforehand, and talk things over. The original asking price had been £100, and Halliday indicated the

36. Chief Postmaster to Assistant Under-Secretary, Public Works, 5 July 1921, Public Works (W) series 1, 20/865, NA Wellington

37. Assistant Under-Secretary, Public Works, to Harper and Atmore, 12 July 1921, Public Works (W) series 1, 20/865, NA Wellington

38. *New Zealand Gazette*, no 68, 21 July 1921, pp 1933–1934

department was willing to settle for that amount.³⁹ Te Ao apparently was not, and the matter went before the judge.

Halliday subsequently informed his superiors that compensation had been fixed after an on-site inspection by the judge, and in the absence of any evidence from the landowner, at £130 for Te Ao and £20 for the leaseholder. Halliday went on:

I was afterwards informed by the Judge himself that he had tossed a coin with the solicitor for the Natives to decide whether he would award £125 or £150. The whole proceeding was farcical, and I think the Minister should be approached to take steps to prevent a recurrence of such a method of disposing of public money. I consider this Judge's last two awards (Porirua and this case) have cost the Department about a thousand pounds in additional compensation, an expenditure absolutely unwarranted, the Crown's evidence in both cases being practically ignored. Unfortunately there is no appeal on the question of value.⁴⁰

The substance of Halliday's report was passed onto the Minister, the Under-Secretary adding:

I understand in addition to the evidence in Mr Halliday's report, that after the case at Levin was over the Judge called upon the claimant to shout for the party, which was duly done.⁴¹

The Minister's reactions, if any, are not recorded. But the compensation, in the amount ordered, was eventually paid, the land surveyed, and the Ohau post office constructed.

39. Halliday to Te Ao, 29 November 1921, Public Works (W) series 1, 20/865, NA Wellington

40. Halliday to Assistant Under-Secretary, Public Works, 2 December 1921, Public Works (W) series 1, 20/865, NA Wellington

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

In 1953 it was determined that the one-acre block contained land in excess of both current and future departmental needs. The plan produced about this time indicated that no more than a third of the acre taken had been used by the post office, the balance, in 1953, being used by an adjoining farmer as free grazing land.⁴² Eventually, about a half acre was declared to be surplus Crown land, and £60 was credited to the Post and Telephone Department. A smaller area, of 13.3 perches, was diverted to roading.⁴³

The largest single area of land taken for public works along the coast was the land used to build the Paraparaumu airport. The development of the airport at Wellington had created a requirement for a secondary, emergency, landing field in the province. After investigation of a number of alternatives, it was decided in 1939 that Paraparaumu was the best of a not altogether promising selection of local sites. Nearly 300 acres was gazetted: around 250 acres of Maori land (Ngarara West B no 7, subdivision 2C, block 3 (29 acres); Ngarara West B no 7, subdivision 2B, block 3 (30 acres); Ngarara West B no 7, subdivision 1, block 3 (90 acres); part Ngarara West B no 5, block 3 (107 acres 3 roods 9 perches); and 30 acres of European land (Ngarara West B no 7, subdivision 2A, block 3).⁴⁴

When notified of the Crown's intention to take the land, Paoka Hoani Taylor objected on behalf of the minors who owned Ngarara West B no 7, subdivision 2B, block 3. This, he said, was the only piece of land from which they obtained any revenue. He asked if the land might be leased rather than taken, concluding his letter

42. Director-General Post Office to Commissioner of Works, 28 September 1953, Public Works (W) series 1, 20/865, NA Wellington

43. *New Zealand Gazette*, no 31, 28 April 1955, p 706

44. *New Zealand Gazette*, no 5, 2 February 1939, p 122

Wellington

by expressing the view that taking the land was ‘an injustice’.⁴⁵ R Semple, then Minister of Public Works, replied that the suggestion that the land be merely leased had been given careful considerations, but the amount of work required to be done, among other things, obliged the Crown to acquire the freehold.⁴⁶ The land was taken, and in due course the question of compensation was considered. The owners of the European land, who also held a lease over the remaining land in the air field block, agreed to accept £1000 both for their land, the value of their lease and various improvements they had made. The owners of Ngarara West B no 7, subdivision 2B, block 3 – the children in the guardianship of Taylor – received a negotiated payment of £611 for their 30 acres. The owners of the two larger blocks had their compensation fixed by the Native Land Court – £1890 for the 90-acre block, £2507 2s 4d for the 107-acre block.

There is no easy way to quantify the amount of Maori land that was taken for public works along the west coast; nor is it currently possible to determine if Maori land was more or less likely to be taken for public works than European land. These, and other related matters, deserve further study.

45. Taylor to Minister of Public Works, 6 January 1939, Public Works (W) series 23/381/49/0 NA Wellington

46. Semple to Taylor, 27 January 1939, Public Works (W) series 1, 23/381/49/0 NA Wellington

12.8 KAPITI ISLAND 1897 TO 1965

The Crown occasionally used its power of coercion not for public works but for what it saw as a public good; the establishment of reserves and domains, and the preservation of sites of historical or ecological significance. The Kapiti Island Public Reserve Act, 1897, was a measure of this kind. It declared Kapiti Island to be a public reserve, vesting in the Crown those parts of the island, amounting to about 750 acres, held by individuals other than the original owners, and prohibited all private dealing in Kapiti land. The owners strongly objected to the legislation in question, partly because the land was appreciating in value, mainly because of the association that their forefathers had had with the island. According to the member for Northern Maori, H Heke, the value of the land lay in its history, and could not be measured in money.⁴⁷ Seddon, however, justified the legislation as a conservation and preservation measure, arguing that if the land were left in Maori hands they would eventually lose it.⁴⁸ In the Legislative Council, T Kelly, New Plymouth, took the same line, claiming that the taking of the land was in the best interests of the Maori owners.⁴⁹ J A Bonar, Westland, interjected that the owners did not want their land taken, but no one took up his point, either because Kelly had expressed the majority viewpoint, or because there was general support for the conservation principles the legislation embodied.⁵⁰ By 1904, the Crown had acquired around 3000 of the estimated 4990 acres on the island, leaving some 1620 acres in the hands of the original owners.⁵¹ Land on Kapiti continued to be acquired, a number of sections being purchased between 1911 and 1918. In 1920, the Department of Lands and Survey reported that a small portion of Kapiti Island was still retained by the Maori

47. Heke, 20 December 1897, NZPD, vol 100, pp 915–916

48. Seddon, 20 December 1897, NZPD, vol 100, p 915

49. Kelly, 21 December 1897, NZPD, vol 100, pp 927–928

50. Bonar, 21 December 1897, NZPD, vol 100, p 928

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

owners, and that proposals to purchase these interests had so far been unsuccessful.⁵² One further section was purchased in 1931. The most recent purchases appear to have been made in 1963 and 1965.⁵³

51. 'Return Showing Particulars in Respect of Island of Kapiti', AJHR, 1894, G-8

52. 'Department of Land and Survey, Scenery Preservation', AJHR, C-6, 1920, p 5

53. 'Crown Purchase Deeds Index Wellington Province', Wellington, Department of Survey and Land Information, not dated

Wellington

Wi Parata had been one of the landowners on Kapiti, and his daughter, Te Utauta Parata (Mrs Webber), was particularly strong in defence of the Parata interest. In 1920 she wrote to Massey in an effort to forestall legislation that would have permitted compulsory purchase of the remaining Maori holdings on the island. This legislation did not, as it happens, proceed. Nor had an earlier attempt, in 1914, to pass legislation of a similar kind. Mrs Webber had protested in that year as well. These interventions may or may not have been influential in preventing forcible completion of the island's purchase. But the 1920 letter to Massey showed clearly the stance Mrs Webber took on the question of rights and entitlement. Her argument was that the land was hers, based on rights created by Te Rauparaha, and directly transmitted. Moreover, she gained her livelihood from the sheep she grazed on her land, and had 'nowhere else to fall back upon to maintain myself and my children'.⁵⁴ The Crown's position was just as clear, and can be seen stated in a 1923 memorandum to the Native Minister, G Coates, from W Nosworthy, Minister of Agriculture, acting for the Minister of Lands. The immediate issue was an application by one of the few remaining owners, a Mrs D'ath, for an exchange of land between herself and the Crown, her own section being precipitous and inaccessible. Nosworthy began by pointing out that the 1897 legislation had set the island aside as a sanctuary for the preservation of the native flora and fauna. He continued:

For this purpose the Crown has consistently acquired all interests in the land, and discouraged all settlement there. Should the present request be agreed to, it would

54. Parata to Massey, 6 August 1920, MA series 1, 5/5/126, vol 2, NA Wellington

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

inevitable mean that in the course of time a private dwelling or public boarding house would be erected in an advantageous position to which pleasure seekers could resort whenever they wished. It would be impossible to keep Kapiti as a safe sanctuary and the whole object of the reservation would be destroyed . . .

In the circumstances, therefore, I regret that I do not see my way to take any action in the matter, and I can hold out no hope that the policy of the Government in this matter will be changed.⁵⁵

To Wi Parata's daughter, the issue was ownership rights that derived from events before 1840; to the Minister, it was the right of the Crown to place restrictions on, or prevent the exercise of, individual property rights if the public good demanded that this be done.

55. Nosworthy to Coates, 6 August 1923, MA series 1, 5/5/126, NA Wellington

12.9 RAILWAY AND PRIVATE PURCHASES 1882 TO 1919

In the 1880s the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company made numerous purchases of Maori land in the district, totalling some 33,000 acres.⁵⁶ Authority to do so derived from the Crown, via the terms of the Railways Construction and Land Act 1881. Some of this land was good, flat, fertile land; exactly the kind of land the Government had been unable to acquire. There was also 15,000 acres of potentially very valuable swamp land. In 1908, when the line was nationalised, land still in the company's possession was vested in the Crown.

Land was also purchased privately, within a legal framework peculiar to Maori land alienation. The Native Lands Fraud Prevention Act 1881 Amendment Act 1889 directed that there be 'as far as possible, inquire into the circumstances attending every alienation' and also 'inquire as to the amount of the consideration paid'.⁵⁷ Measures like this show that the Crown intended that, in the private sector, dealings with Maori land should be fair and above board. Whether the efforts made to monitor these transactions were adequate or not is, of course, another matter.

56. 'Dealings with Native Lands', AJHR, 1883, G-6, pp 9–11, 16–17

57. Native Lands Fraud Prevention Act 1881 Amendment Act 1889, s 5

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

It appears that details of many, if not all, transactions involving land along the west coast were captured in the appendices, the gazettes, the minute books of the Native Land Courts and in particular on the successive certificates of title issued for particular blocks of land. When this information is properly collated, it should be possible to trace the ownership of practically every acre through time, and to model in detail the transfer of land from Maori to Pakeha, the fairness of the process, and the relative importance of the different buyers: central government, local bodies, corporate entities, and private individuals.

The Horowhenua Commission, as it happens, asked that something of this kind be done with respect to land transactions in the various Horowhenua blocks in the years immediately before 1896. The document that resulted is of considerable interest.⁵⁸ Horowhenua 3, for example, contained around 12,000 acres, divided into sections 102 acres in size. It lay to the north, contiguous with block 12 in the east and block 6 in the south. At the beginning of the 1890s it had over 130 owners. The first transaction uncovered by a search of the title deeds was in February 1892, when Robert Stevens paid Warena Hunia £225 for the 102 acres in 3B no 2. In October of that year Stevens sold this land, and possible another 50 acres as well, 152 acres in total, to Alexander McHardie, for £1252 13s. Stevens seems to have made other purchases as well, including two 102-acre sections (3B no 1 and 3B no 3). These last two sections were owned by Hunia and a Hopa Te Piki. Hopa received £225 for his acres, and Warena probably a similar amount. In October 1892 Stevens sold 247

58. 'Horowhenua Block: Return of the District Land Registrar to the Order of the Horowhenua Commission', 9 March

Wellington

acres of land, including both of these sections, to Mark Searle. Searle paid £1734 5s. There were other men dealing in Horowhenua land for a profit as well during the early 1890s. Donald Fraser, for example, purchased (for £200) a 102-acre section from Rangipo Hoani in mid-1892; a few months later he sold 60 acres of this land to John Gower. The sale price was £252. Three years later Gower sold this land, plus another 44 acres, to one of his brother for £790. F J Stuckey purchased the interests of Noe Te Whata (in January 1893, for £150) and Taare Matai (in August 1892, for £100) in the block, and then re-sold this land to Richard Cresswell in December 1893 for £2550. The return made to the commission reported a number of other dealings in block 3 as well. The size of the profits associated with some of these early transactions immediately strike the eye. However, when they are tallied with respect to the amount of land transferred, the figure for the period 1892 to 1894 is in excess of 1000 acres. If that rate of alienation was sustained, block 3 would have been completely sold in not much more than a decade.

Block 14 lay to the south, on the southern boundary of the Horowhenua block. It contained 1200 acres, land eventually determined to be Kemp's personal property. By the time this determination was made, however, the block had been effectively acquired by his lawyer, Walter Buller, passing formally, by way of a mortgagee sale, into Buller's hands in 1899. The report made to the Horowhenua Commission covered, of course, only transactions concluded before 1896, but it does show that by the year of the commission's sitting Buller had already made some purchases of

land in block 14, and that he held mortgages over the balance. It would not have been possible, in 1896, to predict exactly when the land would fall into Buller's hands, but the information placed before the commission indicated that, sooner or later, an outcome of that kind was all but inevitable.

Land at Horowhenua continued to be acquired by private treaty through the 1890s and into the twentieth century. And not just at Horowhenua. The issues of the *Gazette* for the period are strewn with notices to do with the confirmation of land alienations, with applications for the removal of restrictions on sale, and with the notification of investigations under the Native Land Frauds Prevention Acts, covering land from one end of the district to the other.⁵⁹

It would be a mistake to assume that all of these transactions were as questionable as the one investigated or uncovered by the Horowhenua Commission. James Gear and Isabella Ling, for example, purchased a good many Ngakaroro sections, apparently to the satisfaction of the sellers.⁶⁰ Farthing has studied in detail the acquisitions made by W H Simcox in the Wairongomai and adjacent Pukehou blocks between 1878 and 1919, by which time Simcox had purchased 1823 acres and leased another 2380.⁶¹ According to Farthing, the transactions involved were all

59. For example, *New Zealand Gazette*, no 38, 10 July 1890, p 784; *New Zealand Gazette*, no 96, 24 December 1891, pp 1423–1424; *New Zealand Gazette*, no 37, 11 May 1893, p 633; *New Zealand Gazette*, no 74, 26 August 1897, p 1565

60. 'Dealings with Native Lands', AJHR, 1883, G-6, p 11

61. B R Farthing, 'Forest Lakes', *Otaki Historical Society Historical Journal*, vol 1, 1978, pp 11–24

scrupulously honest and fair. One of the main advantages Simcox possessed when it came to buying land was his wife Francis. She was a daughter of William Colenso, and so well-versed in Maori ways, and a fluent speaker to boot. But the main predisposing or 'push' factor seems to have been the progressive fragmentation of the land as it was passed from one Maori generation to the next. As the individual shares became smaller and smaller, it appeared that the owners had less and less incentive to hold onto the land. Typically, purchases were made when an owner died, that is, at about the point in time when the fragmentation of a holding occurred. When Simcox's purchases are mapped, they show no particular pattern: he simply acquired land in the vicinity as and where it became available.

Multiply this kind of situation 100 times or more up and down the west coast. Imagine men perhaps more willing to take advantage than Simcox appears to have been. In the district studied by Farthing, all the land had been Maori land in 1878. By 1978, perhaps as much as 75 percent of it had passed into European hands. It seems quite likely that detailed studies of other districts along the coast would produce similar findings.

12.10 WAIFS AND STRAYS: THE 1960s

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

The progressive fragmentation of the land provided Simcox and others with opportunities to purchase. But it was often difficult to get agreement from all of the owners, and sometimes owners could not be traced. By the 1960s, local bodies in Horowhenua County were running into similar kinds of problems. There were areas of land that were known to be Maori land. Rates were not being paid. Sections were infested with noxious weeds. The owners could not be found. If they were located, they were perhaps unable to pay whatever money was owed. A legislative remedy existed, in that local bodies could apply to have the land vested in the Maori Trustee, who would see to its sale, and to the consequential payment of the sums owing. The files contain details of a number of sections that were treated in this way. Horowhenua 3E1 subdivision 4B, for example, was a small area of 3 roods 14 perches. No rates had been paid for a number of years. It was vested in the Maori Trustee in July 1966, under section 109 of the Rating Act 1925. The owners were advised that if the rates were not paid, the land would be sold. No reply was received, and the land was accordingly sold.⁶²

Horowhenua 11B36 no 5 contained 36 perches. Over 100 persons were entitled to succeed to it. There was some rivalry among these individuals with regard to the section, some wanting to buy out the others. They appear to have agreed to seek a court order, vesting the land in all of the successors, so they could continue to discuss what its final disposition would be. The court, however, was not prepared to vest such a small area in so many owners, and it was passed to the Maori Trustee to

62. McKellar to Head Office, Department of Maori Affairs, 20 November 1970, MA series 1, 54/22/5, NA Wellington

Wellington

sell and to distribute the proceedings. The area was small, could not be sewerred, and was so badly sited as to access that the Levin Borough Council indicated that it would not issue any kind of building permit. This effectively made the section unsaleable to anyone other than the council who, as its happens, expressed interest in acquiring the land at a special valuation, with the intention of adding it to the town reserve. The 1925 legislation vested land in the Maori Trustee for the purpose of sale and the subsequent payment of outstanding rates. There was provision for mortgaging of land, in order to raise money for this purpose, but this section was of little avail in the particular case being considered. Sale was in fact the only option, and there was only one possible buyer.⁶³

63. Hilkie to Head Office, Department of Maori Affairs, 29 August 1967, MA series 1, 54/18/26, NA Wellington

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

Ngarara A78E2 was one of 14 sections in Horowhenua and Ngarara vested in the Maori Trustee in mid-1964, on the application of the Horowhenua County Council. These 14 sections contained, in total, about five acres of land. Ngarara A78E2 was 1 rood 8.98 perches in extent. It was in a good location in township of Waikanae and was considered very saleable. The sole owner was a Raumoia Matenga Baker, whom the county council had not been able to locate. In 1965 the county council expressed interest in buying the Baker section. At that time, a valuation of £850 was obtained. New efforts to locate Mr Baker were made, but without success. In November 1965 a contract to sell the land to the county council at valuation plus 10 percent (£935) was entered into. After settlement had been made, and all fees and charges deducted, £860 17s 5d was left for distribution. Shortly afterwards, Mr Baker was located in Blenheim, and informed of the sale. Events then began to move rapidly. Mr Baker said he would pay the rates. He was advised that it was too late; the land had been sold. The county council's lawyers lodged a caveat, to protect the county's position. Mr Baker's lawyer lodged a caveat, to prevent any transfer of title. Maori Affairs decided to forward the purchase money to Mr Baker, to see if he would accept it.⁶⁴ He did not. It was retrieved and given to the Maori Trustee to hold.⁶⁵ Mr Baker made an application to the High Court, to have his caveat extended. This was refused, apparently on technical grounds.⁶⁶ Shortly afterwards, Mr Baker agreed to

64. MacKinnon to Blane, 15 April 1966, MA series 1, 54/22/5, NA Wellington

65. MacKinnon to Blane, 6 May 1966, MA series 1, 54/22/5, NA Wellington

66. Watts and Patterson to Maori Trustee, 30 May 1966, MA series 1, 54/22/5, NA Wellington

terminate proceedings and take the money. It is not known how much of the £860 was left after he had paid his legal fees.⁶⁷

Horowhenua A5E was another of the 14 sections vested in the Maori Trustee in 1964. One acre in extent, it had seven owners. As of 1 February 1961, some £23 had been owed to the Horowhenua County Council. After the land was sold, one of the owners, a Mrs Murray, complained. Firstly, she claimed that she had approached the Maori Trustee, and had asked that rent money held by the Trustee be used to paid the rates. This had not been done. Secondly, the estate agent employed to sell the land had in fact sold it to a subsidiary company, Peka Peka Properties. Peka Peka had almost immediately re-sold the section at a considerable profit.⁶⁸

A *Truth* reporter took an interest in the case. Peka Peka Properties offered to transfer the sale to the Maori owners, provided they paid the company the original purchase price plus fees and expenses.⁶⁹ In effect, the Maori owners were being asked to buy back their own land. Mrs Murray claimed that the Maori Trustee should not have sold the land in the first place, since money to pay the rates was available. An internal inquiry, however, found that no blame could be attached to the Palmerston North District Office; Mrs Murray had been written to on several

67. Gascoigne, Wicks, and Company to Maori Trustee, 26 May 1966, MA series 1, 54/22/5, NA Wellington

68. Stewart, 'Note for File', 8 March 1968, MA series 1, 54/22/12, NA Wellington

69. Morrill to Head Office, Department of Maori Affairs, 18 March 1968, MA series 1, 54/22/12, NA Wellington

Horowhenua County 1885 to 1970

occasions about the rates, and warned that the land could be sold.⁷⁰ As far as the Maori Trustee was concerned, the case was closed.

70. Stewart to Souter, 21 March 1968, MA series 1, 54/22/12, NA Wellington

Wellington

In April 1968 the New Zealand Maori Council asked for an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the sale. In the council's view, there were lessons of wide application to be learnt, to do with the pressure local bodies were exerting to have land vested and sold for the rates, and the effects different pieces of legislation had on the way vested land was treated.⁷¹ The council wanted the inquiry to focus on the actions of the Maori Trustee and on the legislative framework under which he operated with respect to vested land. When the matter was reopened by the department, the focus was on the actions of the real estate agent.⁷² By July 1968 all inquiries had been completed. There were no grounds for action against the real estate agent. The Maori Trustee had no authority to involve himself in any way in the deal offered to the Maori owners by Peka Peka Properties. All he could do was bring the offer to the attention of the owners. By this time, it appears that the owners had decided to accept the £800 that the Maori Trustee had received for the land, possibly because they could not raise the money necessary to take up the offer made by Peka Peka Properties. The final decision was to distribute the £800, and close the file. The district office was advised accordingly. The memo in question contains a post script: 'Would you please ensure that land is not sold to any land agent unless it is first put up for tender'.⁷³

There were several common themes running through these different transactions. One was the smallness of the individual sections involved. The other was the

71. Booth to Secretary, Department of Maori And Island Affairs, 5 April 1968, MA series 1, 54/22/12, NA Wellington

72. Forsell to Morrill, 23 April 1968, MA series 1, 54/22/12, NA Wellington

73. Blane to Maori Trustee, District Office, Palmerston North, 26 June 1968, MA, series 1, 54/22/12, NA Wellington

problem created by multiple ownership. Either the owners could not all be found, or there were too many of them to reach any kind of consensus about what was to be done. If only one or two were available, they might refuse to accept full responsibility for rate payment.⁷⁴ Again, on the few occasions when owners did develop a plan to make use of their land, they were frustrated by the inability to borrow money for development, for surveys, for roading, or for putting titles in order. The file on the five-acre Ngarara West A3C and its residue section makes this quite clear.⁷⁵ At the same time, there were others who could apparently turn a profit when neither the owners, nor the Maori Trustee, were able to do so. The Horowhenua County Council was the local body that commonly initiated the process that led to the vesting of orphan sections in the Maori Trustee; its files may contain additional information about the amount of land in the district that was dealt with under section 109 of the Rating Act 1925. This legislation was quite restrictive in its operation, in as far as land was vested in the Maori Trustee for the sole purpose of sale and rate payment: not for development, and not for retention in Maori hands. The local bodies had an alternative to section 109; they could apply for a charging order. The courts, however, apparently did not like to deal with repeated applications for charging orders with respect to the same piece of land, and encouraged section 109 applications in such cases.⁷⁶ Along the west coast, the main beneficiaries of section 109 seem to have been the local bodies. Despite this, relations with the Maori Trustee did not always run smoothly; in March 1970, after the Horowhenua County Council had served a notice under the Noxious Weeds Act, it was indicated

74. McLaren to Maori Trustee, 1 November 1963, MA series 1, 54/22/2, NA Wellington

75. MA series 1, 54/22/5, NA Wellington

76. McLaren to Maori Trustee, 1 November 1963, MA series 1, 54/22/2, NA Wellington

Wellington

to the county that if actions of that sort continued, the Maori Trustee might decline to accept section 109 vestings in future.⁷⁷

It is not clear how much land along the west coast passed out of Maori control via the operation of section 109 of the Rating Act 1925. In general, only small, abandoned, or uneconomic sections of land tended to be affected. This suggests that the significance of these transactions may not lie in the amounts of land involved, but in their location at the end of a long line of alienations, the net effect of which was to transfer ownership of the land from Maori to European.

77. McKellar to Horowhenua County Council, 13 March 1970, MA series 1, 54/22/5, NA Wellington

12.11 FINAL COMMENT

There appears to be no way of determining the rate of land alienation after the 1880s, or of determining how much land remained in Maori hands at successive dates after 1886, when the last summary return was made. However, Farthing's study of the pattern of landownership in the Wairongomai and adjacent Pukehou blocks shows that by 1978 most of the Wairongomai block, and about half of Pukehou 4G, was Maori-owned. A number of other, smaller, blocks in the area were Maori-owned as well. Overall, Maori appeared to own about 25 percent of the land in the area concerned.⁷⁸ **Maps indicated that in the early 1930s Maori held significant holdings around the shores of Lake Horowhenua as well. By contrast, almost all of the Tuwhakatupua block, in the far north of the district, had passed out of Maori hands by 1910, the balance, of some 300 acres, being leased to Europeans. By 1929 only 12 acres remained, six acres being sold in that year, the other six acres being eroded away by the Manawatu River.**⁷⁹ Systematic studies, of other blocks and districts along the west coast, are badly needed.

78. Farthing, pp 11–24

79. I R Matheson, 'The Maori History of the Opiki District', in *From Fibre to Food: Opiki, the District and its Development, a Golden Jubilee Publication of the School and District, 1928–1978, Including Early History*, M J Akers (ed), Opiki, Jubilee Committee, 1978, pp 5–14

