

best plan is to reserve the whole or nearly all of them, and, according to the extent of open land around them, the number of freeholders in each such district, the description and value of such bush, &c., either allow the purchasers to purchase the bush in something like proportion to their purchases of open land, or grant to each of them licenses to cut timber. Where bush is abundant but still scattered, I would recommend the combination of both these plans, only modified as to the proportions to be sold and the extent of the privileges granted under the licenses. Along the main bushes reserves should also be made where most accessible from various parts of the open country and connected therewith by Government roads; and outside these reserves, which should be ample, I would allow any quantity of bush to be sold to private persons. Where timber is so plentiful as it is for instance along the Longwood Range (between Howell's Roads and the Waiiau Plain), or on the southern boundary of the Maitara Plain, there can be no objection (always allowing a large discretion to the Waste Lands Board to refuse when there are special reasons for doing so) to the sale of forest land at the same price as open country. As a rule all private bushes are very economically used, and the owners, if a public reserve is within convenient reach, will commonly supply themselves with fencing and building timber from these lands, leaving their own freehold as a stand-by for the future.

Where bush licenses were granted under the old Otago Ordinance, a great deal of destruction took place. Each settler was anxious only to secure for his own use the best trees that were readily accessible, no matter for what purpose required; and the consequence was that a large quantity of second-class, but still very valuable timber, was left standing among the refuse of what had been felled for use and road-clearing; and these accumulations have in many cases been set fire to, partly to open the forest for further access, partly to prevent an utterly impenetrable tangle from forming—and these fires have of course destroyed the timber standing within reach. When in such cases no fires have been resorted to, the bush has often become impenetrable from the overgrowing of the rubbish with creepers, and roads through such parts will now have to be opened more or less by fire at last. All this might be, and at one time was, avoided by the enforcement of judicious bye-laws through a paid Ranger. Whoever fells a tree should be compelled to carry off or destroy all the litter he makes in doing it, and also in cutting his way to it. For the short time we had a paid Ranger these abuses were avoided; but it is futile to hope that this can be done by the police constables, as is attempted now. As a rule it cannot be expected that they should do more than collect the license fees and see that no person within their own range cuts timber without a license. To make them do all that a Ranger should insist on their doing, would simply necessitate an increase of the number of constables. The Ranger should be under the orders of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, as he was until last year in this Province.

I am of opinion that another great preventive of waste in bush reserves would be, wherever possible, to restrict the effect of each license to a particular area, and in all cases to forbid the felling of trees for firewood—a separate license for which should be granted at a low price—which were fit for splitting or sawing.

If the question were simply, Shall licenses be granted at all or shall the bush be sold? I should decide for the latter unhesitatingly. As I stated above, such lands up country sell for from £5 to £7 per acre; and I have no hesitation in saying that one acre so sold does as much good—that is, goes as far in supplying the wants of the owners and his neighbours—as ten acres of Government Reserve, administered as it commonly is at present.

JNO. P. TAYLOR,  
Superintendent of Province of Southland.

---

#### No. 4.

His Honor I. E. FEATHERSTON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Wellington, 14th January, 1869.

I have the honor to enclose the Chief Surveyor's report on the present condition of the Forests of this Province.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,  
Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

---

#### Enclosure in No. 4.

Mr. H. JACKSON to His Honor I. E. FEATHERSTON.

SIR,—

Survey Office, Wellington, 7th January, 1869.

The districts in the Province of Wellington may be said at no very distant period back to have been wholly wooded. The area of the Province is about seven and a half millions of acres, of which, on a rough estimation, from four to five millions are still forest, and valued from 5s. to £1 an acre. About one million is still in Crown land, inclusive of almost inaccessible mountain ranges. The relative destruction of bush upon Crown and freehold lands cannot be estimated. Bush fires have in general been the cause of the destruction of the forests, although the bush has been fallen to some extent in agricultural districts, but in so small a portion, when compared with the whole extent of forest, as to be insignificant. In the Hutt Valley, which was some twenty-five years ago densely bushed, great destruction of property has been occasioned during the last ten to fifteen years, attributable to the severity of floods caused by the clearing of bush.

I am of opinion that there is no occasion for bush reserves for the present in this Province, and that as much bush land should be disposed of in freehold as it may be possible to find purchasers for.

I have, &c.,

HENRY JACKSON,  
Chief Surveyor.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.