

The timber on the Peninsula is principally totara and black pine, with a less amount of white pine, and that almost confined to the Little River Bush. There are only two areas now left on the Peninsula where the timber is untouched; about 1,500 acres between Gough's Bay and Le Bon's Bay, and that in the Little River Valleys. In two or three years all the Akaroa timber will be cut up if the mills continue cutting at the present rate. There are three mills at work in Akaroa; one in Robinson's Bay, one in Duvanchelle's Bay, and one at the head of the Bay, each cutting from 15,000 to 20,000 a week. One at Little Akaloa cuts about the same amount. One at Little River, which could, if the demand was sufficient, cut from 50,000 to 60,000. These five mills are the only points from which timber is at the present being exported from the Peninsula, and, excepting the Little River, three to five years will clear out all the available timber.

The major part of the apparent timber on the Peninsula is actually useless as timber (and useful only as a means of protecting the supply of water to the different streams), consisting principally of broad-leaf and small scrub, with an occasional timber tree here and there.

All this major area will not suffer from the axe of the holders of bush licenses but only from the extension of the fires originating at the different saw-mills and freehold clearings; and I see no possible means of checking this, as people buy bush land only for the purpose of destroying the present unprofitable growth and replacing it with grass.

I think that the fire has passed through about 30,000 acres within the last ten years.

Cyrus Davie, Esq., Chief Surveyor.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT TOWNSEND.

No. 9.

His Honor J. WILLIAMSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

Superintendent's Office,

Auckland, 23rd April, 1869.

SIR,—

In reply to your letter No. 94, of date the 25th ultimo, I have the honor to state that upon receipt of your circular requesting a return relative to the condition of the Forests in the Province of Auckland, application was made to several persons resident in various parts of the Province for information upon the subject. Upon the receipt of the required information, no time shall be lost in preparing and forwarding the return.

I have, &c.,

J. WILLIAMSON,

Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

No. 10.

His Honor D. McLEAN to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

Superintendent's Office,

Napier, 29th April, 1869.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th November, enclosing certain questions, to which you request I will obtain a reply, in order that the Government may be enabled to ascertain the present condition of the Forests of the Colony, with a view to their better conservation.

I have now the honor to enclose the replies to the several questions contained in your letter.

I have, &c.,

DONALD McLEAN,

Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

Enclosure in No. 10.

Survey Office, Napier, 24th April, 1869.

REPLY to QUERIES about FORESTS in the Province of Hawke's Bay, contained in Memo. of Dr. HECTOR, 18th March, 1869.

No. 1. Area of forests, 360,000 acres. Character of forests: The forests are principally situated along the slopes of the Ruahine (western boundary), and along the northern boundary of the Province. Those on the lower spurs of the Ruahine and along the banks of the Manawatu, the Puketitiri, the Pohui, and the Kereru Bushes, on an aggregate about 95,000 acres, contains valuable timber, viz., totara, matai, red and white pine, while the rest is comparatively of little value.

No. 2. The original area (at the time of the settlement of the district, about sixteen years ago) was about 370,000 acres; but it is evident that within the present century at least 600,000 acres of forest have been destroyed by fire.

No. 3. 50,000 acres.

No. 4. About 100 acres freehold, about 900 acres Crown land, about 9,000 acres Native land have been destroyed.

No. 5. The fires on Crown lands have been accidental, arising principally from fern fires lighted by the settlers, the bushes worked by sawyers and splitters suffering most, owing to the inflammability of the limbs and refuse timber upon the ground. The fires on Native lands have generally been lighted by them for the purpose of obtaining fresh or sheltered lands for their cultivations. Formerly the Maoris destroyed large portions yearly, but of late years they have done so rarely, especially in the settled districts.

No. 6. This Province has suffered severely from droughts, during the years 1861 and 1867. The