

destruction by floods on the alluvial flats near Napier and Porangahau has been very great of late, owing probably to the burning out of bush-gullies and scrub, and fern on the hills, which causes the water to reach the lower levels more rapidly than formerly, carrying with it large quantities of silt and clay from the bare hills. The fall from the base of the hills towards the sea being comparatively little, not only shingle, but likewise clay and fine sand are deposited in the river beds, which has caused their silting up (especially the Tutaekuri) to such an extent, that a rainfall of four inches within twenty-four hours (when the ground is previously saturated) causes more overflow than seven inches rainfall did formerly. The destruction to fencing and live stock from this cause has been very severe.

Second Series of Questions.

Referring to the additional questions, I beg to express my opinion—

1. That reserves should be made in large forests, but that the smaller ones should be allowed to be purchased without restriction, as the owners will be more likely to take the necessary steps for their conservation than Government.

2. That bush licenses (which have never been granted in this Province), should be restricted to certain districts, leaving large portions within good natural or artificial boundaries intact. I do not think that a system of supervision for thinning the forests is practicable at present.

The only suggestion although not properly coming under the heading of forests; but affecting the climate and the future supply of timber, I have to make, is—that the sides of the principal roads be planted with trees, such as walnuts, chesnuts, gums and willows, &c., according to the soil and situation, as this has been done in other countries with great success. By paying a small premium to adjoining landowners, many may be induced to do so, it being to their advantage in many respects.

CHARLES SEALEY,
Chief Provincial Surveyor.

No. 11.

His Honor W. H. EYES to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Blenheim, 30th April, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 175, of the 25th March, in which you request that you may be furnished with an answer to your circular No. 513, of the 27th November, 1868, on the subject of the Forests in the Province of Marlborough.

I regret that a reply has not been sent before this, but the delay has been occasioned by my unwillingness to forward the unsatisfactory answers which alone I can obtain to Dr. Hector's queries. The peculiar nature of the wooded portion of this Province, and its rugged and inaccessible character, preclude the possibility of obtaining any very definite information regarding it.

The answers forwarded must therefore be understood to be only an approximation to the real facts.

I have, &c.,

W. H. EYES,
Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

Enclosure in No. 11.

ANSWER to QUERIES as per Extract from Dr. Hector's Memorandum, 18th November, 1868.

1. Area of bush land, about 700,000 acres. Of this a large tract, particularly in Queen Charlotte's Sound, is covered with scrub and dwarf trees; the rest consists principally of black birch and rimu, covering the mountains and sides of the gullies, while the level land and the gullies themselves are densely covered with white and red pine and totara in addition to the other two. Value—no estimate can be formed.

2. The original area does not appear to have altered materially, the accessible parts only being partially thinned for sawing and splitting purposes. The great bulk of forest land, owing to its inaccessible character, is almost unknown, and has never been interfered with.

3. Out of the 700,000 acres, 10,000 acres nearly have been purchased; all the remainder are waste lands of the Crown.

4. No appreciable destruction appears to have taken place either on Crown lands or on freehold. A few hundred acres of the latter have been weeded of the large timber for the supply of the saw-mills, and for splitting purposes.

5. A few thousand acres of birch forest scattered over the mountain ranges occupied by the holders of pastoral leases have been destroyed by fire; by holders of bush licenses, none; by cattle, none.

6. (See answer to No. 4.)

Second Series of Questions.

1. The object in this Province would appear to be how to utilize the enormous extent of timber land in the Northern District by using it as an article of export, and not to encourage its being felled merely for the purpose of clearing for settlement.

2. The timber licenses in this Province are issued at a fixed price per acre, consequently the granting of them does not lead to an extravagant waste of the forest; but the number issued has not comprehended fifty acres. Any system of supervision for the thinning of the forests of Marlborough would be very expensive and unnecessary.
