

## No. 12.

Mr. HEAWOOD to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

County Chairman's Office, Hokitika, 4th June, 1869.

In the absence of Mr. Hoos, I have the honour to forward herewith the information required by the House of Representatives on the condition of Woods and Forests in the County of Westland.

I have, &amp;c.,

J. HEAWOOD,  
Chief Clerk.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

## Enclosure in No. 12.

Q. 1.—What is the area, character, and value of forests in the district?

A.—About two millions of acres. Most of the woods existing throughout the Colony excepting the kauri, puriri, and pohutukawa, are to be found; but the principal timbers are the rimu or red pine, matai or black pine, and kahikatea or white pine; and on the mountain sides tawhai or birch prevails.

Q. 2.—What was the original area of forest?

A.—There is every evidence that the forests are of considerable age; as the quantity destroyed is a mere bagatelle, say 7,000 or 8,000 acres, the area given to Q. 1 may stand.

Q. 3.—How much is still on Crown lands?

A.—About 2,000 acres have been alienated.

Q. 4.—State what has been the relative destruction of forest on Crown lands and on freehold.

A.—Say 6,000 or 7,000 on Crown lands and 1,000 on freehold.

Q. 5.—What causes have led to the destruction of the forest, particularizing the relative effect of accidental fires, felling by holders of bush licenses, and destruction by cattle?

A.—Clearing for the purposes of gold-mining, for paddocks and gardens, as sites for towns and residences, and for roads. The climate is too humid, generally, for accidental fires; no bush licenses have been issued; the destruction by cattle is not appreciable.

Q. 6.—State any damage which has occurred to agricultural districts, or other destruction of property such as mills, &amp;c., that has been imputed to floods or droughts being rendered more severe through the destruction of the forests.

A.—The only instances at all applicable are on the low lands in the river beds of the Hokitika and Arapura Rivers; probably their total absorption by these rivers is only a question of time, and is entirely due to the destruction of the thick scrub formerly covering and protecting the ground. For the most part this is confined to the lands reserved to the aboriginal population and leased to the Europeans.

*Second Series of Questions.*

Q. 1.—Are bush reserves advisable, or should the forests be allowed to pass into freehold with a view to their better conservation than at present?

A.—The whole of the County of Westland, from the snow line on the mountains eastward to the coast line westward, is covered with forest almost entirely; out of the two millions of acres which is about its area below the snow line, only a few thousand acres consisting of river bed and swamp can possibly be excepted. I do not say the indiscriminate destruction of the forest lands is to be desired, but it must be evident to every inhabitant of the County that systematic clearing is wanted; and I do not see the necessity of protective measures, at any rate for the present.

Q. 2.—Does the system of granting bush licenses lead to an extravagant waste of the forest, and could you propose any system of supervision by which the forests might be thinned without their absolute destruction?

A.—No bush licenses have been granted; the timber generally is cut by parties holding business licenses under Gold Fields Act when required for building and other uses; in other instances by squatting settlers or freehold settlers, and by the gold miner.

MALCOLM FRASER,  
Chief Surveyor.

22nd December, 1868.

## No. 12.

## PROVINCE OF AUCKLAND.

## QUESTIONS.

1. What is the area, character, and value of forests in the district?

2. What was the original area of the forest?

3. How much is still on Crown lands?

4. State what has been the relative destruction of forest on Crown lands and on freehold.

5. What causes have led to the destruction of the forest, particularizing the relative effect of accidental fires, felling by holders of bush licenses and destruction by cattle?

6. State any damage which has occurred to agricultural districts or other destruction of property, such as mills, &amp;c., that has been imputed to floods or droughts being rendered more severe through the destruction of the forests.

What is your opinion on the following points?

1. Are bush reserves advisable, or should the forests be allowed to pass into freehold with a view of their better conservation than at present?