

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?

Replies received from the following Districts:—

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Whangarei Highway District. | 8. Waikuku Highway District. |
| 2. Ahipara Highway District. | 9. Kaipara Highway District. |
| 3. Wairau Highway District. | 10. Pukekohe Highway District. |
| 4. Kaukapakapa Highway District. | 11. Mangapai Highway District. |
| 5. Kaurihohore Highway District. | 12. Wareora Highway District. |
| 6. Paparoa Highway District. | 13. Upper Mahurangi Highway District. |
| 7. Waipu Highway District. | |

Whangarei Highway District.

1. The forest may be reckoned at three-quarters of the whole district in extent. Character—shows a large proportion of hardwood trees, such as rata, towai, puriri, manuka, and tawa. The pines, kauri, totara, rimu, nioro, kahikatea, in swampy forest land; also some puketea, tipau, and a host of small softwood trees. On the whole there is not much kauri land in this district, and the value at present, except where it is on the side of navigable streams, next to nothing.

2. If it is meant what was the original area of forest land before the occupation of the Maoris, I should say all the country. If it refers to the time of the European settlement, I would estimate the original area at one-sixteenth more than at present.

3. I do not understand what is meant by Crown land. If Provincial land, the Waste Lands Commissioner will be better able to answer the question. I am not aware of any Crown land, except one or two lots at the Heads of Whangarei.

4. Very little if any forest has been destroyed on Provincial land. The settlers' clearings are small in comparison to the whole area; can be got easily from the late return of the Registrar-General.

5. The causes that have led to the destruction of forests are fires. No bush licenses granted in this district, except by Native owners. The destruction by cattle is of no appreciable extent.

6. None.

Second Series of Questions.

1. My opinion is that bush reserves are not advisable as they harbour Scotch thistles, but as the Provincial Government do not possess any reserves of any considerable extent it is hardly necessary to advise on this subject. I do not know any Crown land with bush upon it.

2. No bush license granted in this district, except by Natives, and I suppose I need not make any suggestions for the good of the Native owners, as to how they should administer their bush estates; it would be useless, as they would not receive any hints from the Government or through them, whatever they might do from a private individual.

J. J. WILSON.

Ahipara Highway District.

1. The forests in this district are light and not of much value except for fencing and firewood.

2. I am not able to state the area.

3. There are only a few small lots on Crown lands.

4. About fifty acres have been felled and burnt off for the purpose of cropping by settlers on freehold.

5. Firing the fern kills a few trees on the skirts of forests. I do not think cattle destroy the forests.

6. I am not aware that any destruction of property has occurred from the destruction of forests in this district.

Second Series of Questions.

1. I do not think bush reserves are advisable as settlers will always reserve a portion of their own bush, and bush land is the best for men of small means to begin on.

2. It will be impossible to thin the forests where they are being felled for the purpose of agriculture, as the fire would kill any trees left standing.

Wairau Highway District.

1. The forests of this district comprise a large breadth of light bush and heavy timber, as rimu, kauri, kahikatea, &c., but its area and value it is utterly impossible to state.

2. More difficult to answer than the former. I would refer the question to Arama Karaka, Native chief residing at Tanoa, Kaipara, the former owner of a large portion of the district.

3. Can form no idea whatever.

4. Do not think any on Crown lands have been destroyed except a few kauris for fencing. Settlers fall their own bush indiscriminately, burn it off, and lay the land down in grass, &c. Much valuable timber, especially fine rimu, is thus destroyed.

5. No bush fires ever occur; do not think a fire would run in standing bush to any extent. No bush licenses held here. Cattle do no injury that I am aware of.

6. None.

Second Series of Questions.

1. Can give no opinion.

2. I should think granting bush licenses cannot fail to cause reckless destruction of timber. I think it is very questionable whether thinning forests would not frequently do more harm than good.