

## CHAPTER I.

### INSPECTION TOURS.

1. I arrived at Wellington on the 3rd of May, and, after a short trip to the Rimutaka, proceeded on the 19th of the same month to Auckland Province, in which I remained till the 25th of June, visiting the kauri and white-pine forest on the Thames and north of Auckland, on the Kaipara and Hokianga Rivers; thence crossing to the Bay of Islands, and *viâ* Auckland to Mercer and the Upper Waikato and Matamata.

On the 1st of August I proceeded to Canterbury, where I remained till the 9th, visiting the Oxford Forest and Timaru.

On the 15th September I proceeded to Masterton, and, having been prevented by floods from going through the Forty-Mile Bush, returned to Wellington on the 19th, and left on the 21st by the alternative route *viâ* Foxton and Palmerston to Woodville and the Seventy-Mile Bush to Napier; thence overland to Ohinemutu and Tauranga and *viâ* Auckland to Taranaki (on 20th October), in which province I spent ten days, after which I came on to Wellington *viâ* Wanganui.

On the 4th November I went to Canterbury, and remained in that province till the 28th, inspecting the forest on Banks Peninsula, &c., and plantations on the plains.

In December I was in the Otago Province, and did not leave it till the 19th of January, when I proceeded to Westland; thence *viâ* the Grey, Buller, and Hope Rivers to Nelson, in February, and on to Blenheim by the Rai Valley. In the same month I visited Sherwood Forest (in the Nelson Province) and the Kaikouras, and proceeded to Christchurch *viâ* Hawkswood and Cheviot Hills, returning to head-quarters on the 3rd March. The total number of days absent from head-quarters during the ten months (3rd May to 3rd March) has been 215, including thirteen days' leave of absence in December. During my inspections in Auckland, Otago, and Westland, I was accompanied by Professor Kirk, who was temporarily attached to the department; and a Mr. Robertson held an acting appointment as forester for forty-four days, in September and October, and did some preliminary inspections in Canterbury.

The maps submitted with this report indicate the routes followed in proceeding from one locality to another.

### DETAIL OF INSPECTIONS.

#### *Auckland.*

2. After visiting the Superintendent and making the acquaintances of several gentlemen interested in the question of forest conservancy, I proceeded with Mr. Kirk to Grahamstown, on the Thames, and thence penetrated into the kauri forests in the Kauaeranga Valley and Mungawhau Creek. On this my first view of a kauri forest I was much struck by the colossal dimensions of this noble tree. Trunks of five and six feet in diameter, running up to fifty and sixty feet without a branch, were not uncommon, whilst those of smaller dimensions, which would be considered fine trees in other countries, were numerous. I was well pleased to note also a fine growth of young kauri interspersed with the rewarewa (*Knightsia excelsa*) coming up wherever fire had not followed in the wake of the bushman, as is too often the case. The mode of felling and methods of transporting the logs from the forest were carefully noted; and, although the subject will be treated separately further on in this report, I may state incidentally that the rolling roads and shoots are on much the same system as those in Germany. The dams and appliances for river transport appear excellent, although a system of supplemental dams, and sleeping of the beds of the streams in which floating is carried on, would be found an improvement. We next visited the Hauraki saw-mill and forests in the vicinity. The forest is situated on low, swampy ground between the Thames and the Piako Rivers, and consists almost entirely of the kahikatea, or white pine (*Podocarpus daerydioides*). On returning to Grahamstown I saw Mr. Gibbon, an applicant for service in the department, who is possessed of considerable knowledge of the forests in the neighbourhood. He informed me that there is a fine virgin forest containing kauri at Kirikiri, adjoining Kauaeranga, with a good stream of water for working; also partially worked kauri forests at Hikutaia and Waitekauri in the hands of Government, and a fine tract of kauri and white-pine forest in the Ohinemuri district, known as Waituwhetu, partly in Government and partly in Maori hands. This information may be of value for future reference should more detailed inspections and the selection of reserves be proceeded with. Returning to Auckland, after visiting the Domain and noting the growth of the young specimens of indigenous trees, such as kauri (*Dammara australis*), totara (*Podocarpus totara*), rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), puriri (*Vitex littoralis*), which are from eight to twelve years old, we next went by Riverhead and Helensville, in the vicinity of which places there is now little or no timber, to Kaihu on the Wairoa River, the banks of which I observed, as we ascended, are fringed with a dense growth of mangrove, behind which appears white pine in the low, and kauri on the higher, banks, with here and there a few pohutukawa (*Metrosideros tomentosa*) and puriri trees.

The Kopuru and Aratapu saw-mills, below Kaihu, appear very complete, but we had only time for a hurried visit.

From Kaihu we visited the Whakara Forest further up and on the left bank of the river. The kauri here was very fine, and we observed one tree of ten feet diameter. There is a fine tramway for bringing out the timber to the river, which is stated to have cost £5 per chain, or £400 per running mile. The laden trollies are drawn by three horses.