

Between Tapuæharuru and Ohinemutu there are several patches of fair forest, the best of which is probably Oruanui, said to contain totara in some quantity. On the road from Ohinemutu by Tikitapu to Wairoa, again one passes through some good forest containing totara, red, black, and white pine; and the margin of Lake Tarawera is fringed with pohutukawa and a sprinkling of puriri.

A portion of the Oropi bush on the Tauranga side is said to have been acquired by Government, and I think that, if possible, the whole block should be leased or purchased without delay. It contains black and red pine, beech (*Fagus fusca*), and I believe totara, but I did not see any of the last mentioned.

There is an interesting and useful report on the flora of this Lake District by Mr. Kirk in the Proceedings of the Auckland Institute for 1872. At Tauranga, the District Engineer, Captain Turner, told me of a fine block of totara forest in the Ahikereru Valley (the Ahikereru stream empties into the Rangiteiki at Fort Galatea), which is in Native hands and scarcely utilised, if at all. Captain Turner thought it would be advisable to explore it carefully, and, if possible, acquire it, as good totara is scarce and much in demand in the neighbourhood. This matter should receive early attention, as should the kauri forests in the Ohinemuri Gold Field district and its neighbourhood, notably on the Tuapiro River, where a virgin tract, which I believe to be in the hands of Government, should be reserved.

This finished my travels in the Auckland Province, and, although such opinions as I have formed as to the comparative value of the New Zealand timber trees will be expressed in the section of this report specially devoted to their consideration, I may mention kauri, puriri, and pohutukawa as deserving of special attention. The kauri forests in the hands of Government still cover I believe a considerable area, and more can probably be acquired: in fact, as the land on which some of the best kauri grows is not well suited for any other crop, it may even be found advisable to buy up tracts supposed to have been worked out wherever fire has not destroyed the young growth, and conserve them for the future supply of this valuable timber.

I think very highly of the puriri, and was sorry to note how comparatively few well-grown trees are now to be found. Its growth should certainly be encouraged, and I am inclined to think that in its proper habitat it will repay attempts at reproduction, both natural and artificial, perhaps better than any other indigenous tree in the colony. Nearly allied to the Indian teak, it forms a very handsome tree, and the deposit of its large glabrous leaves could not fail to improve the soil, with which object it should be endeavoured to grow it along with other trees such as the kauri, the leaves of which have no fertilizing effect. Mr Kirk says, "In durability it probably excels all other New Zealand timbers."

The pohutukawa (*Metrosideros tomentosa*) is almost confined to the Auckland Province, where it has been much used in shipbuilding. It forms a fine handsome tree, with beautiful deep crimson flowers, and Kirk says he has "never seen it perforated by teredines, except in the most superficial manner."

#### Taranaki.

3. On landing at New Plymouth I lost no time in seeing the Deputy-Superintendent (Mr. Crompton) and Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Whitcombe), the latter officer having already furnished me with an excellent report on the forests of the province, in which he evinces much interest; and drawing up a route in accordance with their advice. This embraced a trip to the White Cliffs, where Major Tuke kindly placed the services of Captain Messenger at my disposal, and I could not have wished a better guide. We visited Uranui and the Kaipikari Block in the vicinity, recently acquired by Government. At Uranui I got some valuable information from Captain Good regarding the forests in the interior. We next visited the Kaitake and Pouakai Ranges, the latter in company with Mr. Wells, who kindly gave me the benefit of his knowledge of the locality and its flora.

After returning to New Plymouth, we went *via* Inglewood by the mountain road to Hawera, where Captain Messenger left me, and I proceeded to Wanganui by coach, the time at my disposal not admitting of a stay in the Patea country. The chief timber trees of the Taranaki Province may be said to be the red pine and rewa-rewa or honeysuckle—the puriri, which formerly existed in some quantity within ten or twelve miles of the coast line, being unfortunately almost worked out.

At Tutonganui and Kaipikari there is a good deal of pukatea (*Atherosperma Novæ-Zelandiæ*), the timber of which tree will, I believe, eventually take a higher rank than that now accorded to it, hinau (*Elæocarpus dentatus*), and kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*), with a little rata (*Metrosideros robusta*). Further inland I believe there is some quantity of totara, which is also frequent, but in a stunted form, on the slopes of the Pouakai Ranges, where it is mixed with mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*), kawiria (*Hedycarya dentata*). Higher up on those ranges, I observed *Dracophyllum Urvilleanum* and *Libocedrus Doniana*, *Senecio elæagnifolius*, and *Drimys colorata* (horopito of the Maoris), a magnoliaceous shrub called erroneously by settlers the wild pepper, the wood of which makes a pretty veneer. The forest on these ranges is of little commercial value, but should, I think, be rigidly conserved on account of the numerous streams which have their sources on them, and which might be injuriously affected were the clothing of vegetation removed.

A belt of forest extending twenty miles round Mount Egmont itself is nominally reserved under the orders of the Superintendent (Mr. Carrington). To be of value this reservation should be proclaimed in the *Gazette* by order of the Government, and rigidly enforced. On the mountain road beyond Inglewood, the rimu and honeysuckle are the prevailing trees, interspersed with hinau (*Elæocarpus dentatus*) and tawa (*Nesodaphne tawa*); but the character of the forest changes considerably after the first twelve miles, beyond which there is more black pine.

I think every means should be adopted in this province to reproduce and foster the growth of the puriri, and conserve the honeysuckle, which will ere long have a high commercial value as a furniture wood.

The soil, especially along the coast line, is generally good, and very suitable for the growth of the eucalypti and pines, consisting of vegetable deposits resting on a substratum of tertiary clay, with sand here and there.