

preservation, 1,782 acres; river protection, 6,900 acres; and conservation of water-supply, 13,000 acres; or a total addition of 195,587 acres; thus bringing up the total so reserved at 31st March, 1902, to 2,552,067 acres. The total revenue from State forests during the year was £17,188, and the expenditure amounted to £10,334.

With the view of urging that still further attention should be given to the necessity of making reservations wherever possible for the protection of the flora and fauna of the colony, and at the same time accomplish much that is desirable both from the practical, economical, and æsthetic point of view, I invited the continued co-operation of the Commissioners of Crown Lands and Land Boards in the following terms:—

“The co-operation of the Land Board and yourself is requested to further this most laudable proposal, and for that purpose I would call your attention to some of the objects which might be aimed at:—

“1. The conservation of forest lands covering the upper watersheds of rivers and streams, to insure the maintenance of water-supplies.

“2. To insure the gradual distribution of rainfall, to maintain the climate equilibrium, and to protect the native flora and fauna.

“3. The prevention of the degradation of the surface of the mountains and high hills, and the deposit of detritus in the valleys.

“4. In the low country to conserve scenic effect and shelter, and by preserving the forest and scrub along the rivers to so maintain their banks.

“5. To generally reserve all forest-clad gorges and other places of natural beauty which may be advisable from a tourist point of view, and which also serve to make the colony attractive.

“Bearing in mind the above objects, I shall be glad if you will furnish me with returns, illustrated by general and index plans, showing what has already been accomplished in your district, under the headings of: A (climatic), including objects Nos. 1 to 3; B (scenic), including objects Nos. 4 and 5. In dealing with this important question, please consider your land district as a whole; and in the first instance disregard the ownership and tenure of the forest lands; draw up a broad and comprehensive scheme for the conservation or reservation of the forests under the various heads. Having done this, you will then please indicate by the setting aside of the available Crown lands what is possible and practicable to be done in giving effect to the proposals. You might also suggest what Native or private lands should be acquired to complete the scheme. Where you find it necessary to recommend the resumption of land, European or Native, to give effect to the objects within the scope of the circular, you may be called upon later to furnish a special report, accompanied by a plan showing position and area, and also the value of the lands.”

I am pleased to state that the matter is receiving cordial and earnest attention, and I trust that definite and practical proposals will be available for your consideration and decision.

I am indebted to W. C. Kensington, Esq. (Under-Secretary for Crown Lands) for memoranda and particulars regarding the kauri forests and kauri-gum industry, which I quote *in extenso*:—

“*Report upon Forests of Kauri and other Timbers in the Auckland, Poverty Bay, and Westland Districts.*”

“From time to time various estimates have been made of the amount of kauri still available for the needs of the colony and for export; and when it is remembered that the kauri forests are not known to have ever reached further south than the 38th degree of latitude, it can be well understood that the problem of how long the supply will last is one of colonial interest.

“An exhaustive inquiry has therefore been in progress for some time, and has resulted in the knowledge that north of the Auckland Isthmus there is, either growing in the forest, or in process of being conveyed to the sawmills or placed on shipboard, approximately, the following superficial feet of kauri timber: Crown owned, 528,930,000 superficial feet; in the hands of sawmill companies, 507,343,000 superficial feet; in the hands of private owners, 911,200,000 superficial feet; in the hands of Maoris, 35,700,000 superficial feet. And under the same conditions south of the Auckland Isthmus: Crown owned, 166,770,000 superficial feet; in the hands of sawmill companies, 512,162,000 superficial feet; in the hands of private owners, 36,000,000 superficial feet; in the hands of Maoris, 11,000,000 superficial feet. Giving a grand total as follows: Crown owned, 695,700,000 superficial feet; in the hands of sawmill companies, 1,019,505,000 superficial feet; in the hands of private owners, 947,200,000 superficial feet; in the hands of Maoris, 46,700,000 superficial feet: comprising altogether 2,709,105,000 superficial feet.

“This estimate (which is fairly reliable) shows the existence of a larger quantity of kauri timber than was previously reported; but, even with this addition, the kauri will practically disappear in twenty-three years at the present rate of cutting.

“It must not be overlooked that there are vast quantities of matai, rimu, and other valuable timbers in the Auckland forests which are not dealt with in this report. The same may also be said of Wellington, Taranaki, and elsewhere.

“The question having arisen as to whether or not a light line of railway could be made payable if constructed as far as the Motu Forest, in the Gisborne District, led to an estimate being made of the milling-timber over an area of some 20,000 acres, the result being a total of 897,908,376 superficial feet of milling-timber, or an average of nearly 45,000 superficial feet to an acre. Of the total amount, some 597,674,820 superficial feet was rimu or red-pine, the balance being kahikatea (white-pine), matai, and totara.

“I notice also in the Westland annual returns that there are twenty-nine sawmills in operation in that district, cutting annually 14,464,755 superficial feet, and that there are four hundred men engaged in the timber trade in Westland. I also find that nearly 1,000,000 acres are covered more or less with milling-timber in Westland, and that the estimated quantity of milling timber