



SLEDGE "CATAMARAN" ON GREASED SKIDS.

which is but a small span in the history of a nation.

The supply of the different varieties of timber in the above total is as follows:—

Rimu	..	22,384 millions s. feet.
Kahikatea	..	5,247 millions s. feet.
Birches	..	4,673 millions s. feet.
Matai	..	3,802 millions s. feet.
Totara	..	1,149 millions s. feet.
Kauri	..	1,112 millions s. feet.
Miscellaneous	..	3,405 millions s. feet.
(Miro, maire, silver pine tanekaha, tawera, mangaio, hinau, kamahi, birch.)		

Summary of Sawmills in 1905.

Land Districts.	Number of mills	Horse power.	Annual Capacity
Auckland	.. 49	2,528	244,320,000
Hawke's Bay	.. 61	1,632	81,888,400
Taranaki	.. 31	612	39,500,000
Wellington	.. 73	1,324	100,330,000
Marlborough	.. 16	252	15,722,000
Nelson	.. 58	675	55,333,200
Westland	.. 51	913	88,990,000
Canterbury	.. 9	101	3,363,000
Otago	.. 10	137	5,984,000
Southland	.. 56	1,323	69,500,000
	414	9,497	704,930,600

The output of sawn timber was returned at the census of 1906 at 336,470,930 super feet.

It is noteworthy that the estimated capacity of these mills is in the aggregate more than double the present output.

The Future.

The output of the sawmills represents an area of 41,000 acres. To this must be added a certain percentage for accidents such as bush fires and other causes of denudation. Now the State Forest Department planted last year 1,435 acres, and the year before nearly 1,700 acres. It is something to know that the department has raised some thirty two million trees since it first began to plant, and that it has in its nurseries a total of fifteen millions of young trees ready for planting out, or nearly so, of two to three years old. But it is not enough to overtake the wants of the future which, if something is not done at once will have to be satisfied

from elsewhere. At the same time it is perfectly clear to anyone who reads his contemporary history that most other countries are more or less in the same plight.

The situation is grave enough for the most energetic application of the farthest-reaching measures. (1) The planting rate must be increased at least tenfold. (2) Existing timber must be preserved with the greatest vigilance. (3) The question of prohibiting the export will have to be faced. (4.) As the denudation will greatly diminish firewood and fencing timbers, the settlers must devote a large amount of attention to growing timber for household and fencing requirements.

Distribution of Timbers.

The Kauri District.—The kauri tree is found nowhere but in that part of the North

Island north of a line drawn from Waikato Heads to Tauranga. At Aotea, to the southwards, and elsewhere, kauri trees are found, but so few that the above line has been recognised always as the kauri boundary.

In some parts only single trees are found, in others they occur in clumps or groups, sometimes forming extensive groves, or even large blocks, almost to the exclusion of all other trees. Most frequently the kauri will be found mixed with rimu, kahikatea, tanekaha, miro, totara, totara-kiri-kotukutuku, northern rata, puriri, tawa, tarairi, matai, and many other trees, the tawa as a rule being most abundant. The nikau, or southern palm, is plentiful all through the district, and is everywhere accompanied by noble tree-ferns and palm-lilies. The underwood is composed of various shrubs, and the ground is carpeted with a rich growth of delicate filmy ferns. A large kauri forest is one of the grandest sights to be found within the entire range of the vegetable kingdom: massive columnar trunks, 4ft. to 8 ft. in diameter, clothed with smooth grey bark, rise close together, often to the height of a hundred feet or more, their spreading arms and deep-green leaves presenting a picture of the greatest luxuriance and vigour. At the base of each tree is a large mound of humus, formed by the decay of bark through successive centuries. The surface soil as well as the humus is charged with resin that has exuded from the fallen leaves or twigs. Some of the most ancient specimens are among the oldest trees in the world, and must have originated in a period long before the Christian era, yet they exhibit all the life and exuberance of early youth.

The great question is as to the date after which this splendid timber will be no more. According to the table of distribution, the kauri left standing on the 31st March, 1905, represented an aggregate of 1,112,000,000 superficial feet. Now in the year 1903-4, the thirty-six mills dealing with kauri cut up 144,000,000 ft. of it. At that rate the kauri forests will not last more than eight years.



RIMU END, TOTARA BUSH WORKINGS.