

III.—PROVINCIAL REPORTS.

No. 1.

ANALYSIS OF REPORTS RECEIVED IN 1869.

Dr. HECTOR to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

PART I.

(No. 260.)

SIR,—

Colonial Museum, Wellington, N.Z., 11th June, 1873.

Provincial
Reports.
Analysis of
Reports, 1869.

In reply to your letter of 27th ultimo, requesting me to consider the subject of the conservation of the natural forests of the Colony, with the view of suggesting what action, if any, should be taken by Government towards effecting this object, I have the honor to furnish a tabulated statement of the information that was elicited in reply to circulars issued to the Superintendents of Provinces in 1868.

I think that the information then obtained showed that although it is highly necessary that steps should be taken to preserve the indigenous forests, yet the diversity of circumstances in different parts of the Colony prevents the application of any general measure, and naturally suggest it to be a subject that can be better dealt with by local legislation.

The greater part of the native forest in New Zealand is chiefly valuable to the Colony from its promoting the precipitation of moisture from the winds, restraining the rapid gathering of floods, and protecting the alluvia in the lower parts of the valleys (generally the only valuable agricultural areas) from rapid destruction.

The extent of forest which is valuable from the amount of marketable timber it contains is only a very small proportion of the whole, and according to the evidence, is best conserved by the rights of private ownership.

I have, &c.,

JAMES HECTOR.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

ANALYSIS of CORRESPONDENCE relative to CONDITION of the FORESTS of NEW ZEALAND, 1869.
(Parliamentary Paper, D. 22.)

QUESTIONS.	AUCKLAND.	HAWKE BAY.	TARANAKI.	WELLINGTON.	NELSON.
1. What is the area, character, and value of forests in the district?	Of large extent; generally valueless except for firewood and fencing; occasional patches of kauri.	360,000 acres, of which 95,000 acres of totara, matai, and red and white pines, are situated on spurs of Ruahine, banks of Manawatu, &c.; the rest valueless.	All forest, but a belt of four miles along the coast. About 59,000 acres purchased by Government from Natives.	4,500,000 acres, valued from 5s. to £1.	3,000,000 acres; on level land and valleys; totara rimu, rata, and pines.
2. What was the original area of forest?	All originally forest; little destroyed.	370,000 acres 16 years ago. Within the century 600,000 acres destroyed by fire.	Not stated.	All bush.	Destruction almost equalled by planting.
3. How much is still on Crown lands?	Little alienated.	50,000 acres.	11,000 out of purchased blocks.	1,000,000 acres.	Little alienated.
4. State what has been the relative destruction of forest on Crown lands and on freehold.	Very little on Crown land. Clearings for agricultural purposes on freehold.	100 acres freehold. 900 acres Crown land. 9,000 acres Native land.	None on Crown land. Freeholds cleared for agriculture.	Cannot be estimated.	Little on Crown land. A few thousand acres on freehold.
5. What causes have led to the destruction of the forest, particularizing the relative effect of accidental fires, felling by holders of bush licenses, and destruction by cattle?	Kauri gum diggers' fires; none from other causes.	Accidental fires.	Falling and burning; also cattle.	Mostly bush fires. Felled also in small relative degree for agricultural purposes.	A few hundred acres by bush licenses. Not yet injured by cattle, but possibly will be.