

PART I.

ESTIMATE of the AMOUNT of BUSH DESTROYED in PRIVATE and PUBLIC LANDS.

Reports, 1874 :
Otago.

No. 3.

District.								Public.	Private.	Total.
Akatore	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	500	600	1,100
Clarendon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	700	100	800
Canada Bush	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	50	...	50
Clutha	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	30	130
Glenkenich	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	500	50	550
Glenomaru	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	400	100	500
Kaitangata	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	300	50	350
Popotunoa	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	20	120
Rankleburn	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	...	100
Tautuku	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,000	800	3,800
Toetoes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	50	20	70
Tuturau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	200	40	240
Waikaia (or Switzer's)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	150	...	150
Warapa	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	500	150	650
Wyndham	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	150	30	180
Inch Clutha	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	200	200
								6,800	2,190	8,990

4. There are fourteen saw-mills at work in my district. Their horse power is 3 at 6, 2 at 5, 3 at 8, 4 at 10, 1 at 14, and 1 at 18. The revenue paid by saw-mills is £325.

5. There have been twenty-three sawyers' and splitters' licenses issued, but many of the men are only splitting.

6. The amount of revenue paid by sawyers and splitters is £115; settlers' licenses (£2 10s.), £52 10s.; firewood (£1), £65.

7. The principal cause of the destruction of bush is fire caused by so many saw-mill licenses being granted in small bushes. The best of the timber is picked out (or timber fit only for saw-mill purposes), leaving a great deal of other useful timber. The tops of the trees taken for saw-mills are left to wither, and in the summer very often set on fire by some bushman who wants to clear a tract to some other part of the bush, and the result very often is that the whole of the bush is set on fire and a great deal of useful timber destroyed.

8. There has not been any replaced, except in the Popotunoa reserves.

9. In public lands only about four acres have been planted. In private lands I estimate that not more than from 250 to 300 acres have been planted.

10. I have been informed by many of the oldest settlers in the Mataura district that the climate has become much drier within the last eight years. This is accounted for by the district having become fully stocked, causing the rough country to be burnt; also, a great number of people has settled in the district, causing a great deal of ground to be cleared and cultivated.

11. I estimate that the supply of timber yet remaining will be sufficient to meet the demand for from forty to fifty years. That is without taking into consideration the Tautuku bush, which is unavailable for a large portion of my district.

If the Tautuku bush is considered, I believe that there would be timber sufficient to supply the demand for at least 150 or 200 years.

12. I am of opinion that unless some very stringent regulations are made for the management of the bush reserves, there will, in the course of a few years, be very little to protect.

13. The only way to protect the bush reserves is by a thorough inspection. I would recommend that a person should be appointed in each district who would take an occasional look through the bush reserves in his district, and who, I think, should act under instructions from the District Ranger. To meet this additional expenditure, I would recommend that the license fees be raised. There is another suggestion that I think worthy of the consideration of the Board, and that is, that the Government take over the bush reserves in districts where timber is scarce, and that no licenses should be issued for these bushes, but that men be employed to cut and supply timber to the settlers, and that the charges for timber be only sufficient to pay all expenses. That when the men had a sufficient supply of timber on hand, they could be employed in fencing and clearing a portion of the reserve; and that when such portion is cleared, planting could take place. By this means a few acres could be planted every year, and as the native timber was removed, other trees could be planted, and so the supply of timber kept up.

14. The best way to encourage artificial planting on private land would be by offering a money grant of say £4 per acre, the grant not to be given for less than five acres. It would also be a great encouragement to settlers if they could be supplied with young trees at cost price for planting, as there is great difficulty in growing young trees from the seed in the up-country districts. The only way to encourage planting in public land is by adopting my suggestion contained in reply to the 13th query. Of the trees that I have seen growing in my district, I would recommend the blue gum, the Scotch fir, larch fir, and the oak; of the Californian trees, I would recommend the *Pinus insignis*, *Pinus austriaca*, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, *Cupressus governiana*, and the *Wellingtonia gigantea*.