

PART I.
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Reports, 1874 :
Otago.

description of forest trees suited, by habit of growth and nature of fibre, to the climate of each district in the Colony, as also their adaptation to any special industry which might be profitably conducted in a particular locality.

Local Forest Boards.—The Local Forest Boards, to be appointed by the Central Board, should be composed solely of men practically acquainted with arboriculture in all its branches. If such are not to be found in the Colony, they can be obtained—sufficient inducement offering—from Scotland, where instruction in forestry is largely imparted to working gardeners.

The Indian Government, feeling the want of competent foresters, though preferring those from Germany and France, was forced, much against its inclination, to obtain these Scotch arboriculturists for the management of its forests, and I think the example might be followed with advantage in this Colony, where the climate, at any rate in the Middle Island, assimilates in a large measure with that of the home country. Under any circumstances, if the future management of the public forests is to prove a success, all considerations of political power or social standing should be ignored, and the members of Forest Boards be appointed on the sole consideration of a practical acquaintance with the subject.

I have, &c.,

WALTER H. PEARSON,

His Honor the Superintendent, Dunedin.

Commissioner of Crown Lands.

SOUTHLAND FORESTS.

SIR,—

Invercargill, 28th April, 1874.

I have the honor to report that the quantity of timber cut this year, under the new regulations, has been, for the ten mills now working, as follows, viz. :—

		£	s.	d.
January.	472,239 feet, at a lordship or rental of 3d. per 100 feet . .	59	0	5½
February.	538,469 feet " " " "	67	5	3
March.	529,852 feet " " " "	66	4	6

1,540,558 feet, at a lordship or rental of 3d. per 100 feet, £192 10 2½

When the twenty saw-mills now in Southland are in full operation, they will employ, on an average, fifteen hands each, or a total of at least 300 men, whose combined wages will amount to about £36,000 per annum, the quantity of timber cut being over 12,000,000 feet, and largely exported, realizing for distribution over the district the large sum of about £50,000 per annum.

It is gratifying to be able to state that the forest is being fairly dealt with and properly utilized. The new timber regulations appear to work well. While they are liberal and workable, they are, at the same time, such as to enable the Inspector to enforce the proper utilization and prevent any wasteful destruction of the forests.

It is also gratifying to have to report that there have been no bush fires during the past summer, which has been very much due to the great care exercised by the mill-owners, who have expensive plants, in the shape of machinery and tramways, to maintain.

There are upwards of 800,000 acres of forest in Southland, and nearly all available, which, at the rate of 100 acres per annum to each of twenty saw-mills, would last for 400 years. There is, therefore, no reason to apprehend a scarcity of timber, provided the forests are not wantonly destroyed (as there is ample time for a succession of full-grown timber), both by preserving the young native plants and by planting British and other forest trees.

I have, &c.,

The Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands,
Southland.

DUNCAN McARTHUR,
Inspector of Forests.

WESTLAND.

His Honor J. BONAR to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Westland.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Hokitika, 12th May, 1874.

Referring to your letter No. 27, 15th October, 1873, respecting the preservation of forests, I have the honor to state that, as the whole of this Province is densely timbered, no necessity has as yet arisen for taking any steps to preserve our timber; and as I regard the timber trade here as one of the most important and permanent industries of the Province, I should be sorry to see restrictions placed on its development.

The only suggestion I have to make would relate to improving the character of our timber by regulating, after a careful inquiry and experimental tests, the seasons during which trees should be permitted to be cut down, and so secure only a properly seasoned article being sent into the market. A little attention to this would, I feel satisfied, tend greatly to increase the value of our timber, and thereby improve our Provincial estate.

Having this object in view, I have requested the different saw-mill proprietors to cut a log of each description of timber at the commencement of the different seasons, so that a proper comparison may be made.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

JAS. BONAR,

Superintendent.