

## WELLINGTON.

THE southern portion of this district occupies the entire breadth of the North Island, from Cook Strait to the mouth of the Rangitikei River on the West Coast, and Cape Turnagain on the East. Its northern portion extends to the 39th parallel of south latitude, comprising the country lying between the Provincial Districts of Hawke's Bay and Taranaki and the sea to the mouth of the Rangitikei. The total area is estimated at 7,000,000 acres. The district thus comprises the loftiest mountains of the North Island—Ruapehu, 9,100ft., and the elevated country at its base, the Kaimanawa Range, the western slopes of the Ruahine Mountains, the Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges—so that much of the area is of a broken character; consequently a large portion of the forest is only of poor or indifferent quality. On the other hand, the Wairarapa and Manawatu Valleys have long been celebrated for the quantity and quality of their totara and rimu, which afford employment to about six hundred men. In many places the mountain-slopes carry extensive forests of tooth-leaved, entire-leaved, and silver beeches, often of large size, while the valuable black maire occurs in greater abundance and attains larger dimensions than in any other district in the colony.

The total area of forest-land, exclusive of climatic reserves, is 2,406,000 acres, of which 706,000 acres are held by the Crown, and 1,700,000 acres by the Maoris. There are now 435,000 acres of Crown forests under survey for purposes of settlement. Forest reserves for climatic purposes comprise 210,680 acres. In the northern part of the district beech-forests cover a considerable area on the slopes of the Kaimanawa Mountains, but at present little is known as to their quality and value. The western face of Ruapehu is clothed with forest up to 4,000ft. or higher; on the high land much of the forest is of good quality up to 2,000ft., containing a large proportion of red- and white-pine, towai, and silver beech; at a greater elevation all these are replaced by mountain beech, which also forms a broad belt on the northern and southern faces of the mountain, but on these sides it does not extend into the lower lands. A vast extent of forest occupies the middle portion of the Wanganui basin, but in many places it is light and patchy. The western slopes of the Ruahine Range are covered with forest, the general character of which resembles that of the Makaretu Reserve, on the Hawke's Bay side of the range, but in many places it exhibits greater luxuriance, and the proportion of ordinary pines is greater. It extends into the upper part of the valley of the Rangitikei, and between that river and the Manawatu; formerly it constituted one of the best-timbered districts in the colony, but much of it is now cleared and settled.

The Tararua Range, in the southern part of the district, is wooded on both sides, although much of the forest is of indifferent quality. On the east the lowland forest extends across the Puketoi Range to the vicinity of the coast at Akiteo, and comprises a large proportion of good timber. Several special settlements are being formed on the western side of this area. Farther south, the eastern side of the district possesses but little forest of really good quality, a large extent of forest land having been cleared by fire. In the Wairarapa, however, a large amount of good timber is still to be found on the lower slopes of the Tararua Range, and will supply the mills of the district for some years to come. The Rimutaka Range, on the western side of the Wairarapa Lake, carries a large amount of beech, much of which, however, is small and growing in places difficult of access. Red- and white-pine, tawa, &c., occur in small valleys and hollows of the mountains, but only occasionally in large quantity.

Extensive forest reserves have been made in the Wellington District, but almost exclusively for climatal purposes. They have been formed on the higher slopes of the Ruahine, Tararua, and Rimutaka Ranges, on land not suited for settlement on account of its excessively-broken character and poor quality. In portions of these reserves the whitewoods and other valueless kinds may be gradually replaced by useful timber, although the process will be tedious and somewhat costly; but the greater part must remain in a state of nature, as, even if good timber could be grown in such situations, it could not be got out at any reasonable cost. The preservation of the forest in localities of this kind is absolutely necessary for the protection of the sources of the streams and rivers.

### CHARACTER OF THE FOREST.

The mixed lowland forest comprises a large proportion of the best timber in the district for milling purposes, although in many localities the trees are much scattered. Red- and white-pine, totara, matai, and miro are mixed with tawa, maire-raunui (which in some districts is plentiful) titoki, cedar (*Dysoxylum spectabile*), rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*), rata, towai, and other large trees in varying proportion. In many places tawa is the prevailing tree, and the pines may be solitary and distant: in others they may occur more frequently, but scarcely forming groves, and in this case are mostly of large dimensions, as may be seen at Pakuratahi, where rimu, kahikatea, maire-raunui, and tawa are large and of good quality. In a few places tooth-leaved and entire-leaved beeches occur sparingly, but they are more frequent at higher levels. Sometimes the greater part of the forest may consist of red-pine alone, or more commonly mixed with white-pine, or in swampy valleys of white-pine alone. In other places large patches or groves of totara occur, and constitute the most valuable portion of the forest. A dense undergrowth of various shrubs and small trees, frequently intermixed with supplejack, often impedes progress.

Much of the mixed forest now in the hands of the sawmillers at the foot of the eastern side of the Tararua Range is of considerable value, although the pines are by no means of the largest dimensions—say, from 30ft. to 50ft. in the clear, and from 21in. to 36in. in diameter at the base. In most places a considerable quantity of tawa is found, but little of it being above the medium size. Rimu, kahikatea, matai, and totara occur freely, sometimes intermixed, no one kind pre-