

The following statement of forest areas is taken from the Year-book quoted above, and was published in the report of the Survey Department for the year ending the 31st March, 1893 :—

North Island—						Acres.
Auckland Land District—						
North of Auckland	...	...	...	...	...	1,800,000
South of Auckland	...	...	...	...	...	3,420,000
Taranaki	...	...	...	...	...	1,850,000
Hawke's Bay	...	...	...	...	...	1,900,000
Wellington	...	...	...	...	...	3,400,000
Middle Island—						
Marlborough	...	...	...	...	...	400,000
Nelson	...	...	...	...	...	3,240,000
Westland	...	...	...	...	...	2,394,000
Canterbury	...	...	...	...	...	492,000
Otago	...	...	...	...	...	1,182,000
Southland	...	...	...	...	...	500,000
						20,578,000

The State forests reserves, including those made for climatic reasons, comprised 1,164,382 acres.*

From the report of the Lands and Survey Department, issued by the Surveyor-General, S. P. Smith, Esq., F.R.G.S. (1895-96), the following information *re* State forests is given :—

“ STATE FORESTS.

“ At the date of last report the area that had been reserved for all classes of timber reserves amounted to 1,150,918 acres. During the current year 60 acres in Marlborough and 4,980 acres in Southland have been withdrawn from reservations for settlement purposes. On the other hand, 18,504 acres have been reserved for forest purposes to preserve native fauna and flora, as also for scenic effects, so that the total now stands at 1,164,382 acres. The largest areas reserved are on the shores of Lake Waikaremoana and the Little Barrier Islands. A good deal of timber scorched by fire has been disposed of during the year, especially from the Thames district, where disastrous fires occurred in past years in the kauri forests, destroying large quantities of valuable timber, and leaving much other timber in a state that necessitated sale to avoid total loss. The principal sales have been in the Auckland District, where, on account of the greater dryness of the climate and the inflammability of the kauri, the greatest damage to the forest occurs. Last summer having been exceptionally dry, the forests have suffered in consequence, and in the Puhipuhi State forest especially a considerable amount of kauri timber has been injured. Since the returns were made up on the 31st March all this damaged timber, together with that injured by the great fire some years ago, has been disposed of at remunerative prices. The extension of the railway-line from Whangarei towards Puhipuhi has rendered the sale possible. Large fires have occurred in other parts of the colony also, so that besides the denudation of the country of its forest clothing by the operations of settlement considerable areas have been rendered waste by accidental fires. Where the country is otherwise useless for settlement it would seem to be a wise policy to replant these areas with useful timbers, selected for their ability to withstand fires. Something is being and has been done in the past in sowing the burnt areas with grass, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Southland, is taking in hand some of the bush areas from which the timber has been cut out, and replanting them with young timber-trees. The result of this experiment will be looked forward to with interest. Preparations are also being made to try tree planting on the bare Kaingaroa Plains, in the Auckland District, as well as in Otago, and such operations might be extended with great advantage to the country, for the timber supply is fast diminishing through the progress of settlement.”

OUTPUT AND LABOUR.

The value of the total output of sawn timber in 1890 was £832,959, which, owing to the depression in that year, is no less than £344,754 below that of 1886. When the census was taken in 1891 twenty-five mills had been closed, and the number of persons employed had fallen from 5,042 to 3,266, many of the mills at work being on less than half time. Of the total output for 1890, the forty-seven Auckland mills contributed more than one-half, the value of their output being £416,978, whilst the manufactures of the 196 mills in the other provincial districts were valued at £415,951.

The sum paid in wages during the same year is stated at £271,783, but this includes only a portion of the amount paid to the bushmen, fellers, and others engaged in preparing the logs for conversion, as many mills purchase logs from settlers, or employ contractors, also deliver the logs at the mill at fixed rates. The approximate value of land, buildings, machinery, and plant was returned as follows: Land, £160,750; buildings, £92,848; machinery and plant, £246,674; total, £500,272.†

* Now (1897) 1,172,750 acres.—ED.

† The Year-book for 1896 gives £898,807 as the value of the output of 1895 from 299 mills. The wages for the same year were £323,223; and the total value of land, buildings, machinery, and plant, £586,422.—ED.