

of the tropics, New Zealand kauri is obviously at the limit of the kauri range, and this is intensified by the cooler insular climate of North Auckland relatively to that of tropical and sub-tropical regions. If we are to assume philosophically that our kauri might be a slowly disappearing species, nothing is more certain than that it will disappear faster in Nature than in carefully tended forests where it will be freed where necessary from competition and damage by more aggressive shrubs and trees and encouraged to grow vigorously. The pure botanist has little if any conception of silviculture, but relies on an academic knowledge of the natural growth of individual plants and plant societies. He has no appreciation of the concept of forestry as an art and as an applied science, and yet has purported to advise the public on the future of Waipoua. Of one visiting botanist, and an eminent one, it was published in the press that he had posed certain scientific questions to the resident ranger at Waipoua, but had received the reply, "We do not know." This attitude was adequately replied to by the Government Botanist at a local-authority meeting open to the press, where he was reported as saying, "There were two extremes and the truth probably lay in between. He spoke of the need of proper forest management and of the harvesting of the crops of timber raised. It was quite wrong, he said, to leave a forest alone and exposed to the fire hazard. It was wrong to think that the State Forest Service was exploiting the kauri forest. The eminent English botanist had spent one day in the forest and had questioned a State forest employee who could not answer the questions raised. It was surprising that such a prominent man would make a statement on which he had no facts. The statement was worthless."

Contrary to many of the false allegations made, the State Forest Service has a very sound knowledge of the practicability of perpetuating Waipoua, and, indeed, it must be frankly stated that unless the Forest Service proposals are given effect to, the Dominion will in time lose this magnificent heritage of Waipoua Forest.

These proposals, as set out in a working plan pursuant to the Forests Act, provide for reservation of large individual trees and outstanding clumps, and for a wilderness area of 7,200 acres to demonstrate the eventual doom of Waipoua by allowing Nature to do its worst and not its best. No forest anywhere in the world is managed so crazily as to leave dead and dying trees in the forest—an economic waste and an offence to the eye. The proposals provide, further, for liberating young kauri which are being suppressed or damaged by overtopping vegetation; for thinning kauri saplings and poles where growing in fierce competition; and for felling some of the mature trees to make way for rejuvenating the forest by natural regeneration.

Last, and not least, is a practical problem of management. Once normal economy is restored to the Dominion, once there are adequate transport facilities to enable a greatly increased Dominion population to frequent Waipoua, the fire hazard will be increased a thousandfold. The mere fact that Waipoua may have existed for perhaps four thousand years will not guarantee its continued existence—as a national park—for even four years should a catastrophe occur in one of our periodical dry summers such as those summers in 1928 and 1946.

As a State forest, on the other hand, with a large labour force working in the forest; with the exotic portion extended and managed, and sheltering the indigenous portion and fitting well into the felling plan; with a network of roads and tracks providing rapid access to any part of the forest to deal with fire; and with the silviculturists improving the forest as only they can: then can future generations count on still possessing a Waipoua Forest.