

1903.
NEW ZEALAND.

FORESTS - CONSERVATION

(REPORTS RELATIVE TO).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives dated the 29th September, 1903.

Ordered, "That there be laid before this House copies of all reports made by the Commissioners of Crown Lands of Taranaki, Wellington, Marlborough, and Westland referred to by them in their replies to Circular No. 507 and not yet printed—namely, (1) a report of the Chief Surveyor of Wellington to the Surveyor-General dated the 13th October, 1898; and (2) memorandum 195/72, of the 25th June, 1897—a report from the Marlborough Land Board on the various timbers in the Rai Valley."—(Mr. McNAB.)

FOREST-CONSERVATION, WELLINGTON LAND DISTRICT.

Department of Lands and Survey,
District Office, Wellington, 13th October, 1898.

I HAVE the honour to submit for consideration the following particulars and proposals relating to forest-conservation:—

Crown Lands.—The remaining Crown lands in the Wellington Land District are as follows:—

	Acres.
Lying open for selection under the Land Act	116,847
Not yet classified or opened for sale	765,079
Total	881,926

Forest Reserves (gazetted).—The attached Schedule No. 1 shows that reservations of forest and mountain lands which have been gazetted in terms of "The New Zealand State Forests Act, 1885," aggregate ... 111,748a. 3r. 30p.

Forest Reserves (not gazetted).—In addition there are the ungazetted blocks in the same schedule ... 173,982a. 2r. 0p.

Total	285,731a. 1r. 30p.
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Localities and Obstacles to Conservation.—The great bulk of this area of 285,731 acres comprises the summits and higher slopes of the Rimutaka and Tararua Ranges, and may be said to extend from near the sea at Cape Turakirae to the Manawatu Gorge, with a varying width from two to ten miles, which was excepted from the Wellington and Manawatu Railway allocation. Some years ago this reservation was encroached upon at the northern end by the settlements. The absorption by the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company, under their contract with the Government, of the whole of the Crown lands on the western slopes of the Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges unfortunately curtailed my proposals on this subject, dated the 21st April, 1881 (copy attached), without, in my opinion, conferring on the company any commensurate advantage. The Crown was thereby deprived of the power to conserve a large area of mountainous and hilly forest- and scrub-clad country embracing the upper portions of the watersheds of the numerous rivers and streams debouching westward from the ranges inland of the West Coast and Hutt districts.

Before handing over the allocated lands to the company another reserve of 13,300 acres round Mount Wainui, inland of Paikakariki, was made. There is also a block of 1,000 acres on the Pohangina River, and 3,900 acres embracing the upper Kaiwhata basin. In addition, several smaller blocks were conserved in various localities throughout the Wellington Land District.

Insufficiency of Existing Reservations.—The above area of gazetted and ungazetted forest reserves might be considered as extensive and sufficient, but when it is borne in mind that the area of the Wellington Land District amounts to 6,811,000 acres it will be admitted that further conservation is urgently necessary. A glance at the general map will demonstrate that in numerous localities no provision has so far been made to set aside areas of forest lands.