

1903.

NEW ZEALAND.

FORESTS CONSERVATION:

REPORTS BY COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS DEALING WITH THE PRESERVATION OF
NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA.*Return to an Order of the House of Representatives dated the 2nd July, 1903.*

Ordered, "That there be laid before this House a return showing the replies of the Commissioners of Crown Lands throughout the colony to the queries dealing with the protection of the flora and fauna of the colony submitted to them, as detailed in last year's report of the Department of Lands and Survey (1902, C.-1, page 10)." —(Mr. McNAB.)

[NOTE.—The maps, &c., attached to this paper when laid upon the table were not ordered to be printed, but have been bound and lodged in the office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives.]

CIRCULAR NO. 507.—TO ALL COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 10th March, 1902.

Preservation of Native Forest.

WITH a view of urging that still further attention may be given to the necessity of making reservations wherever possible for the protection of the flora and fauna of the colony, I append a resolution passed by the Conference of New Zealand Horticulturists, which met at Dunedin in June last.

"That members of this Conference deplore the vandalism, which is destroying, unchecked, our native flora, which we believe ought to be protected; and that we would urge upon the Government that they take such steps as they may deem necessary to preserve certain portions of the native forest of the colony, with a view of preserving the native flora and fauna."

The co-operation of the Land Board and yourself is requested to further this most laudable proposal, and for that purpose I would call your attention to some of the objects which might be aimed at:—

1. The conservation of forest lands covering the upper watersheds of rivers and streams, to insure the maintenance of water-supplies.
2. To insure the gradual distribution of rainfall; to maintain the climate-equilibrium; and to protect the native flora and fauna.
3. The prevention of the degradation of the surface of the mountains and high hills, and deposit of detritus in the valleys.
4. In the low country, to conserve scenic effect and shelter, and by preserving the forest and scrub along the rivers to maintain their banks.
5. To generally reserve all forest-clad gorges and other places of natural beauty, which may be advisable from a tourist point of view, serving as they do to make the colony attractive.

Bearing in mind the above objects, I shall be glad if you will furnish me with returns, illustrated by general and index plans, showing what has already been accomplished in your district, under the headings of—A (climatic), including objects Nos. 1 to 3; B (scenic), including objects Nos. 4 and 5.

In dealing with this important question, please consider your land district as a whole; and, in the first instance, disregard the ownership and tenure of the forest lands. Draw up a broad, comprehensive scheme for the conservation or reservation of the forests under the various heads. Having done this, you will please then indicate by the setting-aside of the available Crown lands what is possible and practicable to be done in giving effect to the proposals. You might also suggest what Native or private lands should be acquired to complete the scheme.

Where you find it necessary to recommend resumption of land, European or Native, to give effect to the objects within the scope of the circular, you may be called upon later to furnish a special report, accompanied by a plan showing position and area, and also the value of the lands.

J. W. A. MARCHANT,
Surveyor-General.