

47. We are told it is inferior bush: is that so?—That all depends on what you compare it with. If you compare Southland with the bush in the North Island, it is very inferior, undoubtedly.

48. Well, that bush that has been cut out within a radius of thirty miles?—Yes, it is inferior to bush that I have worked in the Seaward Bush some twenty or twenty-five years back.

49. Is it difficult to get good heart of red-pine?—Well, it is difficult to get red-pine of any sort in Longwood; but good heart of red-pine is quite as plentiful at the present time in comparison to production as ever it has been in Southland.

50. What is your opinion as to increasing the areas of hilly country?—I think the areas should be increased.

51. To what?—It all depends on the size of the mill.

52. Now, as to the royalties, do you think they should be increased or decreased?—I think the royalties are pretty right as they are. I do not see that there is any necessity for a change.

53. *Mr. Jennings.*] How long have you been a Crown Lands Ranger?—For a little over four years.

54. Have you had any experience in any other bushes besides Southland District?—Well, I have been through some other bushes, but not to a very great extent.

55. Are you familiar with any of the bushes in the North Island?—Yes.

56. Waimarino?—No.

57. The kauri forest?—No. I have been into the kauri forest near the Thames, but that is all.

58. What has been your experience in regard to the destruction of bush lands by fire since you have been in the district—have you any knowledge of that?—Yes, I have a fair knowledge of what has been done here by fires during the last thirty years.

59. Has it been extensive in any way?—With the exception of two or three years it has not been extensive. It was rather extensive in one block that was let between Orepuki and Waiau. There was rather much sawmilling-timber burned there or destroyed at one time: it was burned or ruined by the fires and died.

60. When was the extensive fire?—Somewhere about twelve to fourteen years ago.

61. Speaking generally, it is quite possible for a fire to get into the bush and become very destructive—is that your experience?—No.

62. Are you aware of what took place in Dannevirke, Puhipuhi, when fire got into the bush there?—Yes, I can quite understand that in the North Island it may be destructive, but I am referring to Southland.

63. I want to get at it generally?—It may be very destructive in the North Island.

64. You think there is an ample supply of timber further back within the thirty-mile area that you speak of. Have you been further back than thirty miles?—Yes.

65. And you have a knowledge of it?—Yes, part of it; it is not all valuable sawmilling country.

66. Is it possible to get an accurate knowledge of the country that is away back where the timber exists?—It is possible.

67. It has not been done to your knowledge, has it?—No, it has not been done.

68. *Mr. Field.*] You cannot give us any idea of how long it would take to cut out the timber on the Crown lands in Southland—you say twelve years for land within a radius of thirty miles?—Yes, with the exception of Mr. Massey's area.

69. But there is a large area outside that which you cannot say how long it will take to work out?—There is an extensive area to the west which has not been explored yet.

70. You say the milling areas should be increased, but how long do you think it would be a fair thing to allow the mills to run?—They should have at least ten years' life.

71. Is it possible for fires to burn your Southland forests, bearing in mind the fact where the fires have been in Longwood?—It is possible; in a dry year a fire may spread through a beech forest, but in any other forest in Southland it will not reach far in maiden bush.

72. I do not know whether it is your duty, but it seems to me you will probably agree that some attention should be paid to keeping down the noxious weeds in this timbered land as the mills cut it out: is that being done?—Yes, to a certain extent, it has been done. I dare say it has not been quite efficient; but there is a certain amount of work done, at all events, in connection with it.

73. Do you not think that their attention ought to be called to it?—I do.

74. Have you gone into the question of tree-planting?—Yes.

75. Some of this land is so filled with weeds that we are told it would cost more than the land is worth to clear it. Should not that be planted with timber-trees?—No, there is too much old wood lying about likely to destroy the work you would do.

76. But if there is no timber left?—I would advise that it should be planted.

77. Do you think it would be worth considering the question of planting in this district—not our own trees, but foreign trees of a suitable character?—That is my opinion. I advocate planting.

78. *Mr. Morris.*] I would like to get your opinion again about the area a mill should be limited to—say, a ten-years mill, capable of turning out 350,000 ft. per week?—I did not say that a mill should be limited to an area. I said it should have at least ten years' life—say, from ten to twenty years' life.

79. *Mr. Jennings.*] According to its capacity?—Yes; a mill should have an area in proportion to capacity.

80. *Mr. Barber.*] Where is this forest to last twenty years?—Along the Seaward Bush line, in an easterly direction—Oteramiki.