

estimated at £250,000 worth of timber—were withheld from the market, with its consequent employment of labour; and also if from 25,000 to 40,000 acres of land, capable on the average of carrying from two to two sheep and a half to the acre, were to be permanently reserved from settlement.

12. Mr. McCarroll forms a different estimate of the value of the soil in that forest?—I can only give my own opinion. We have a very successful cheese-factory within a few miles of Waipoua; there is a successful district on the northern side, and we are drawing cream from the eastern side. I have been through the district, and there is not sufficient difference in the quality of the soil to justify me in saying that any large portion of it would be of less value than the land on an average sheep-run.

13. We have been told that the settlers have been starved out of one settlement to the north of Waipoua, and that only lately have others gone in to try and make a living?—I refer to Waimamuku, which is closer to the coast.

14. Do you know the Auckland Settlement, and the result in that case?—Those settlers took up the land in small areas when the road was not passable; but I consider the land there is distinctly superior to that in the Marlborough Settlement, and the settlers there are making a success of dairying on country which was thought nearly impossible for such a purpose years ago. It is on the eastern side of Waipoua. Dairying is not a success, I admit, on the Marlborough Settlement.

15. How many settlers in the Auckland Settlement are supplying cream now?—I think less than twelve. I do not think any of the higher country is now used for dairying, but the quality of the soil has been proved to be such that it can be used as dairying country. Visitors wishing to see kauri-trees can see some of the finest specimens in existence at Kauri Park, and adjoining that area there is a good kauri bush belonging to Mr. Trounson which, if acquired, would justify the State in maintaining it as a kauri exhibit.

16. Mr. Clarke.] Why buy Mr. Trounson's bush when we have one of equal or greater value in the hands of the Crown already?—For the reason that the other is inaccessible.

17. The Chairman.] Is there any other point you wish to mention?—I wish to suggest the reafforestation of some of our northern lands, which are lying unproductive. We contribute our revenue to the Forestry Branch of the Department and get nothing in return.

18. Mr. Lethbridge.] Are you not getting one-half back for your roads?—No, because in the case of a forest reserve on Government land no timber is being cut. We have been told that in the case of royalties derived from State forests from which the reservations have been lifted the money is earmarked by law for reforestation; so the north gets practically nothing now, although for the first year after the Royalties Act was passed we did get something where the reservations had been removed.

19. Has nothing been done at Puhipuhi?—Very little. There are considerable areas on the west coast here which would grow good trees, and which are fairly safe from fire. They are gum reserves on Crown land.

20. The Chairman.] That is the point. We know we can grow the timber, but can we preserve it from fire?—They are doing it at Rotorua.

21. Have you any views on the question of prohibiting the export of white-pine?—There is a general point in that connection which should be considered. Considerable areas of kahikatea have been purchased at a value estimated on the export demand, and large areas are being held by the present owners because of the export value. The question is therefore whether there would not be an injustice done those who have purchased it on the strength of the price obtained for this timber for export purposes if its further exportation is prohibited. That is all I wish to say.

WOOLSEY ALLEN sworn and examined. (No. 47.)

1. The Chairman.] What is your occupation?—I am a sawmiller, residing at Dargaville. I do not think the exportation of white-pine should be stopped for a considerable time. The Government should, however, set apart certain areas to meet future requirements, but the exportation should not be blocked for many years to come.

2. Mr. Lethbridge.] Is there a good deal here?—It is mixed with other timbers, and there is a large quantity left still. Some people want the land cleared as soon as possible, and now you cannot acquire timber-rights for more than two or three years at the outside. If the Government block the export these people will fell and burn the kahikatea, and nobody will benefit. Now the settlers are making money out of the royalty, and slowly getting their farms into order. New Zealand timber-merchants now only use the very best of the white-pine, while the Australian market takes anything—from 2 ft. by $\frac{3}{4}$ in. upwards, second- or third-class material that we in New Zealand will not look at. I can sell anything from 2 ft. in length and upwards.

3. Mr. Murdoch.] What proportion of butter-box sizes do you get in kahikatea?—65 per cent. Australia will take all the 6 in. by 1 in. it can get for lining, and the rest goes into butter-boxes.

JAMES MAXWELL sworn and examined. (No. 48.)

1. The Chairman.] You are the caretaker of the Waipoua Forest?—Yes. I have been twelve years in the district, and six years caretaker. I know the Waipoua Block thoroughly. The kauri throughout the area of 23,000 acres is scattered in clumps, with very little on the eastern side.

2. What kind of timber is growing there?—Rimu, miro, taraire, kahikatea, and a little totara.