

3. Is the soil fit for dairying supposing the bush was removed?—Certainly, outside the kauri area. Where the kauri is growing some of the soil is fair, but as you know kauri absorbs all the good in the soil.

4. From your experience do you consider the Waipoua climate very wet?—Yes, it is very wet.

5. Is there much danger of that bush being burnt if it caught fire accidentally?—There is no danger of its being burnt so long as some vandal does not set fire to it in very dry weather.

6. Have you known of a fire being started there and going out?—I have seen a fern-fire started more than once and run up, because I have done it myself. In the winter-time, when the wind is blowing from the forest, we sometimes burn a bad bit of fern, as it is the most suitable time to burn. But it is risky even then, and I am extremely careful.

7. Whenever a fire of that kind has been started it has gone out again?—Certainly.

8. *Mr. Murdoch.*] You are quite conscious of the fact that if the fire had got into the bush it would have gone through the bush?—The bush would burn to a certain extent; but the gum-diggers had carte blanche for twenty-five years to try their level best to burn some of it, and they did burn a little, but very little. When these men were camped in the bush they lit fires at the bottom of some of the trees, but only a little of the tree was burnt. The fire never ran through the forest.

9. *The Chairman.*] Are there any settlers living round and about that reserve?—There are none in the immediate vicinity of the kauri forest. The Auckland Settlement adjoins the reserve.

10. How long is it since you were there?—I think, six years ago. I do not know the condition of the settlement now. I could send you a report on it, because I do not think the Crown Lands Ranger has been there lately.

WHANGAREI, MONDAY, 21ST APRIL, 1913.

LIONEL HANLON sworn and examined. (No. 49.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What do you wish to say?—I have been asked to wait on the Commission by the Fruitgrowers' Association here, which has recently asked the Minister of Agriculture to select and plant suitable areas of land in the vicinity of Whangarei for the supply of timber for fruit-cases for the near future. Some years ago fruit-cases cost us 4s. 6d. a dozen, then they went to 5s. 3d., and this month the price has been again raised to 7s. 6d. a dozen. I refer to bushel cases. Native timbers are used—in fact, anything. Apples are sold at 2s. 6d. a case.

2. Have you known of *Pinus insignis* being milled here for cases?—No; but at Port Albert that timber is being used for cases, while at the Tasman Settlement, Nelson, *Pinus insignis* is being planted for the same purpose.

3. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Are the settlers at Port Albert milling the *Pinus insignis* themselves?—No; I think they take it to the local mill. I heard of one settler who planted 5 acres recently for fruit-cases on the same soil he is growing fruit on.

4. *Mr. Clarke.*] Have you used that timber here?—No. A number of *Pinus insignis* trees forty years old were cut down in the town here recently, but the mill would not take them away, as they deemed them worthless. There are many thousands of acres here that would grow *Pinus insignis* well; also apples.

5. *The Chairman.*] Private or Crown land?—Mixed.

6. In the event of the Government entertaining the idea of making a plantation here, at what price could the land be obtained?—Close to the town the value would be considerable.

7. Could they get it for £1 an acre?—Yes, and less. A little out of the way it could be got for from 10s. to £1.

8. *Mr. Murdoch.*] Could a block of 10,000 acres be obtained?—I could not say. Plenty of gum reserves that are nearly worked out could be got.

9. *The Chairman.*] We can only recommend plantations on large areas?—Gums do not kill out the fern for many years, but *Pinus insignis* does it in a few years, and nothing I know of has a better chance here than the *Pinus insignis*.

10. Have you had any experience of the poplar as a fire-resister?—I have not seen a poplar burning, and cannot say whether a belt of that tree would check a fire. The Lombardy poplar does not do well on poor land. The aspen poplar has been taken up locally for cabinetmaking by Harrison and Sons. Some trees at Mairtown are 3 ft. in diameter.

11. *Mr. Murdoch.*] Was fern the cause of the Puhipuhi plantation catching fire?—Yes.

12. *Mr. Clarke.*] Were any precautions taken to guard it?—No.

13. *The Chairman.*] If tea-tree were burnt off and *Pinus insignis* seed sown broadcast, would the latter beat the tea-tree?—I believe *Pinus insignis* would. At Parahaki, near here, you can observe the *Pinus insignis* coming up through the tea-tree.

14. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Are there many imported birds here?—Thrushes. The blackbird is dying out. I do not think the latter are to be feared, because Waiotapu simply swarms with blackbirds, and still the *Pinus insignis* is increasing rapidly there. They do not kill the seedlings.

15. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Do you use your fruit-cases over and over again?—Only once.

16. Consequently the quantity required is very much increased?—Yes. We have to look out for disease, and there is difficulty in getting them back again.

18. *The Chairman.*] Have you had any experience of taraire as a timber?—Boards of that timber have recently been used in the erection of a factory here in defiance of the by-laws, and it seems a remarkably hard timber with good lasting qualities. You can see the place. I have seen large quantities of it in the bushes close here, while hundreds of acres have been burnt a few miles out from Whangarei. You can see the remains of the trees—50 ft. to 60 ft. high, without a branch, and from 12 in. to 24 in. in diameter. The country there is of a similar class to that in the Nelson District, and, like that land, grows the finest apples.