

JAMES TROUNSON sworn and examined. (No. 58.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are a sawmiller, I believe?—Yes.

1A. One matter we are inquiring into is whether; in view of the increasing demand for white-pine timber and the diminishing supply, its exportation should be prohibited. Have you any remark to make on that question?—I think its export should not be prohibited. The Government sells the timber for the highest price it can get for it—on their own conditions—and it would be wrong to put a tax on that timber after the miller has bought it. If the Government wish to preserve the timber, and desire to impose certain conditions with that end in view, a very important question is raised. I pay rates amounting to £200 a year to the Hokianga County Council for a bit of kauri bush I hold at Kaihu. It is all very well to talk of saving your timber when one is paying £200 a year to one local body, but how is it to be done? You cannot very well compel the owner of the land to reserve the timber and then rate him to the full limit. The Government lately sold some timber-rights at Kirikopuni to the Kauri Company at 6s. a hundred feet. Would it be fair to put another 3s. on that before allowing the company to ship it?

2. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Is there any taraire in the bush you allude to?—Plenty of it. I intend to put in a tram and work the whole of that area. It would not pay me to leave any live trees.

3. Do you know the Waipoua Forest?—Well; and also the value of kauri timber. I gave a piece of 60 acres to the Government, and it turned out all right. I saved it. I consider the land at Waipoua Forest is more valuable to turn to good account than to reserve the timber, which is in danger from fire through the progress of settlement. For twenty years I paid rates on kauri timber. Then I bought some land near the place where I held the timber-rights, and I contemplated spending any money I got out of the timber on that land; and on it I subsequently carried from five thousand to six thousand sheep, and got £1,000 for the wool off it the other day.

4. What was the area?—A lot is carrying two sheep to the acre, and it is paying me now far better than leaving the timber would have done. The area of the Waipoua Forest is nearly 25,000 acres, and that is being kept locked up for the sake of a bit of kauri bush which nobody can see. The settlers are made to go round, but as settlement progresses the fire will go in and that bush will be destroyed. You might expect me to be naturally biased in favour of my own district, as I want it to prosper; but I have the finest flock of sheep in New Zealand on the land I speak of, which is an argument in favour of utilizing it.

5. *The Chairman.*] You consider the land in the Waipoua Forest is suitable for settlement?—It is land equal to, and in some places better than, the land I have in my holding. I felled everything, got a good fire through it, obtained the best grass-seed, and I was surprised at the result. I held a piece of bush at Kaihu, and offered it for sale before clearing the timber off my land. I offered it at £2 an acre, but the timber being there nobody would buy it. I then put it in grass, and I have since been offered £15 an acre for part of it.

ROBERT HALDANE MAKGILL sworn and examined. (No. 59.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are M.D., and District Health Officer for the Province of Auckland?—Yes.

2. You wish to offer some evidence on the question of tree-planting by consumptives, and the suitability of that occupation in connection with the treatment of consumption?—Yes. My evidence is really contained in the departmental report for 1908, a copy of which you have, on the suitability of the Taupo district for the purpose mentioned. It is considered a very suitable district for the treatment of consumption, and tree-planting is a suitable kind of work for such patients. It is very difficult to find suitable work for convalescent consumptives, but as tree-planting is required in that district the two matters seem to work in rather well.

3. How long was the scheme in operation at Taupo?—There was a little trial scheme in operation for two years with about fourteen patients, but it was not at Taupo but at Rotorua, about eight miles out. On the whole the experiment was satisfactory, and I think the men were able to sustain themselves from their wages. In fact, some made a little over, and were able to do sufficient work to pay their own expenses, although they were scarcely the class of men I intended it for, but a little more advanced in regard to the disease. I hoped to secure people who were in the early stages of the disease, and these men had been under treatment at Cambridge.

4. Why was the system given up?—It was abandoned about the middle of 1910, the chief reason being that the land immediately around the camp was all planted and the men had to go a very long distance, and it became beyond their powers to take a long walk to the planting-place, do a day's work, and return at night. It was felt at that time that the question was one largely of land, and I did not care to start on a fresh basis on a larger scale.

5. On what basis were the patients paid?—On piecework, I think. They were paid by the Forestry Department.

6. In the event of any recommendation being made by this Commission that such labour should be utilized for this purpose, could you state what number of men would be available?—It is a difficult matter to estimate, but it would be quite easy to have a camp of sixty patients able to do a reasonable day's work.

7. Would it be necessary in such a camp to have a medical man stationed?—Not strictly necessary, because the class of patient would not be men requiring medical treatment; but it would simplify matters to have a medical man there to enable us to have a freer hand in sending patients to such a camp.