

9. You also have had experience in the Gisborne district?—Not much in the bush. There is very little Crown land there carrying timber, but even there pressure was brought to bear to throw it open for settlement. At Motu we did keep back several thousand acres that had *Fagus* in it.

10. Is that timber milled there?—They tried some for sleepers and fencing, but it warps badly. It is used in Reefton for mining props, studs, and joists. I have never seen it used for furniture.

11. Have you reported on preserving the bush at Mokau?—Lately I was asked to report in detail on the scenic reserves there. A proposal has been made to exchange part of the Crown lands along the bank of the river for a scenic reserve.

12. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Would it not be better to buy the land right out?—I have told the Government that as far as the land above the mines is concerned I would not have it for pastoral purposes even if they gave it to me. I do not put any value on the scenic reserves. It would be a great pity to fell the bush on the land I refer to, because the land would then only slip into the river. Some of the bush will have to be destroyed to give road access if the land is ever settled.

13. *Mr. Cockayne.*] If this country is so rough that it cannot be settled, how can it be of any value?—A lot is of no value, but there is some good land.

14. In estimating your timber do you take tawa into account?—No.

15. Are there any areas of tawa country which are of little value for farming purposes?—There would be a certain amount, but a lot of our country is so very rough that I question whether you could mill the timber properly for butter-box purposes.

16. Could it be kept for future milling when the white-pine is cut out?—Not in the country we have left in Taranaki.

17. *Mr. Clarke.*] What building-timbers have you?—Chiefly rimu, and a little matai and totara.

18. How much of the remaining 150,000 acres of Crown land contains milling-timber?—I could not tell you. But I gather there is very little good milling-timber in the district now.

19. Do the millers get their supplies from the King-country?—The milling is chiefly done on the Auckland side. Part of the King-country is in my district.

20. *Mr. Murdoch.*] Is it desirable that that long, narrow strip of reserve at Everett's Road should be kept?—There is a good deal of the original bush there.

21. It seems all second growth?—Yes, but it is the native second growth coming back again. The original bush was trampled out by cattle.

22. Seeing it is such a long, narrow piece, and that the residents are doubtful about its being retained, would it be wise to continue it as a reserve?—I suggested not long ago we should cut out the part which has been burnt. Some of our reserves are costing a lot of money for upkeep, and the financial burden is rather great accordingly.

23. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] What is that land worth if opened for settlement?—£4 to £5 an acre; at any rate, £3 10s.

24. *Mr. Murdoch.*] We were told that it would fetch £30?—That would be cleared and grassed; but they would not get that in the bush. They would realize on the timber first. The land alongside only runs to £20 an acre. £30 would mean stumping and clearing, a work of many years.

25. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Does not a good deal of the Wanganui River have a frontage to Taranaki?—One side is our boundary as far as Pipiriki.

26. A good deal of the river-front is not reserved?—There are Native blocks fronting the river in one or two cases, and a number have been surveyed for scenic reserve purposes.

27. But it is not yet acquired?—It is not gazetted yet.

28. Could the Maoris lease that land?—Some has been leased.

29. Could they lease in the meantime to outsiders the portion you have surveyed and recommended as a reserve?—I suppose they could.

30. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Do you not issue a Proclamation?—In some cases they have leased it because no Proclamation has been issued.

31. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Then the land recommended for scenic purposes is in the same position as unsurveyed land?—Yes. Some of it has been gazetted, and we are negotiating for an exchange respecting some scenic reserves proposed to be taken in the Kohuroa Block.

32. *The Chairman.*] In such a waterway as the Wanganui River, where land suitable for settlement abuts on the river, do you not think it would be as well to allow that land to be settled to afford a contrast to tourists coming down the river from Taumarunui, to whom otherwise the scenery might get a little wearisome?—I think so. Too much stress can be laid on reserving a lot of the bush along the river, as some amount of civilization does afford a relief. It would be unwise to fell any bush on the steeper slopes of the Wanganui and Mokau Rivers, as it would be detrimental to their navigation to do so.

---

JOHN JOHNSTON sworn and examined. (No. 69.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Kindly tell us your position?—I am the Dairy-produce Grader at the port of New Plymouth.

2. From where do the butter-factories here obtain their timber for butter-boxes?—From locally grown timber, principally from the Main Trunk line.

3. Have the Dairy Association a mill there?—Yes.

4. Have any experiments been made here with other timbers than white-pine for butter-boxes?—Not in Taranaki. In Wellington an experiment was made with *Pinus insignis*, and it turned out very well.