

21. With regard to the National Park, I suppose that is pretty wild country?—Yes.
22. Have you been on it?—Years ago. Some portions of it may be good land.
23. Have you been on Stewart Island?—Not for a long time. It is all forest. I do not think that Stewart Island is suitable for settlement, and there is no demand there for settlement land. Mr. Arthur Traill, on behalf of the settlers, has requested me to go to Stewart Island and inspect the scenic reserves with a view to the uplifting of some of the reservations.
24. I have here a copy of a schedule of quantities of timber available sent from here to the Head Office. Have those figures been prepared by Mr. Collins, the Ranger?—He probably checked them. They would be compiled from the various reports and office records.
25. When these schedules were sent to Wellington was there any qualifying statement attached?—I do not know. I would like to see my covering letter. The figures were really approximate.
26. Have you had any practical experience in valuing timber-areas?—No.
27. *Dr. Cockayne.*] As far as Southland is concerned there is really no information of any value as to when the timber will all be felled?—We know only about certain areas; but that return is only an approximation.
28. *Mr. Clarke.*] Is it not just as likely that the quantity is overestimated as underestimated?—Yes. I think that return is taken from one of the forestry returns, from which the quantity since milled has been deducted.
29. *Mr. Adams.*] Is the variety of trees here the same as on the West Coast?—I think so, but there are much better trees in Westland than here. The people here cut everything, because of the manufacturing that is done.
30. *Mr. Clarke.*] Are there any places along our route in Southland it would be desirable to see with a view to afforestation?—No, unless you go into the Longwoods. The really good land has all been let. I purpose reserving a wooded hill at the back of Otatau for scenic-reserve and water purposes.
31. *Dr. Cockayne.*] What has been done with the top of the Longwood Range?—It has been reserved for climatic purposes.
32. *Mr. Clarke.*] Where is the nearest point you could recommend an area for planting timber for building purposes in this district?—There would be no difficulty in getting land to plant if you had the suitable timber-trees. No land district is so much under agriculture as Southland, but it has too much rain, and therefore we do not want any more bush. There is plenty of land here that is available that is better than the Hanmer land.
33. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Have you any scenic reserves that are not required that could be drawn upon for settlement?—I do not think so. Until land becomes too valuable to hold as scenic reserves it should remain in its present category.

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JAMES COLLINS sworn and examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are the Crown Lands Ranger and Timber Expert, Southland, for the Lands Department?—Yes.
2. You have had considerable experience in estimating the value of Crown and other bush lands?—Yes.
3. Is it confined to this district?—I have been in other districts in the North Island and Otago. I have been in this district since I was twenty, but have been eight years in the Government service. Prior to eight years ago I was sawmilling.
4. Were these tables regarding timber-areas in Southland which have been sent from the local office to Wellington compiled under your supervision?—No, but I think I was consulted over some of them.
5. Who would have compiled them?—I think they have been compiled chiefly from my reports.
6. Probably they are all compiled from your reports?—Most likely. I have not seen these before, though. The chief part consists of only rough estimates, because they relate to places where nobody has been. All the country west of the Waiiau is practically unsurveyed.
7. Are the estimates within 50 per cent. of being right?—I would not say that. They are all underestimated.
8. What has been the system in leasing timber-areas to the millers?—A sawmiller took up an area of about 200 acres, which would be surveyed; and there would be other reserves—say, about three others of 200 acres each, or 800 in all.
9. How did he pay for it?—On an estimate given by the Crown on the area as surveyed.
10. Did you prepare the estimates of the amount of timber in these blocks?—No; they were chiefly calculated by the surveyor who surveyed the land. I have also done some.
11. What was your method?—To get the height of the tree, the diameter, and the average; and then the method of calculation as to the quantity of sawn timber that would come out of that tree was to square two-thirds of the diameter, and multiply that by the length. The result would be practically the same as that arrived at by the method adopted by the surveyors here.
12. What was the smallest tree you would consider a milling-tree when measuring the bush?—We measure generally any tree which will not be less than a foot in diameter at the butt.
13. How long has that been in vogue?—Since 1886.
14. What would be considered a good average milling-bush here?—10,000 ft. per acre at the present time.
- 14A. What is the highest figure you have got off an acre in this district?—Close on to 40,000 ft., in the case of the Seaward Bush in the early days.