

4. Were the complaints justified?—Quite possibly they might be. Rabbits and weeds accumulating on the edges of these reserves might become a nuisance unless closely watched.

5. Have any of the reserves complained of ever been vested in a local body?—In some case, like the Selwyn Plantation Board, they have been. They are vested in a Domain Board; but, as a rule, the Lands Department supervise them.

6. Has anything come under your notice as to damage done by deer in State forests, or to settlements?—Not in North Canterbury. They are at the headwaters of the Rakaia, but are not doing any harm.

7. *Dr. Cockayne.*] What about Marlborough?—I heard complaints there from settlers on the north bank of the Wairau that the deer come down and eat the turnips and worry the domestic stock.

8. Do you consider they are detrimental to the forests and the young growth?—They are likely to bark the trees, and where the forest has been destroyed and is growing again, if deer are allowed to roam through the bush they would destroy the growth; but in old standing bush I do not think they do much harm, or more harm than cattle.

9. They would tend to check regeneration?—Decidedly.

10. *The Chairman.*] I understand you have done a good deal of estimating and measuring of timber?—Yes, in the North Island, and I was in the timber trade for some years. To estimate growing timber requires considerable experience.

11. Could any reliance be placed on an estimate of growing timbers comprised in a district of many miles extent, such estimate being made at a few days' notice?—Very little, unless the man were a keen observer. As a rule such estimates are not to be relied on.

12. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Could a man stand on a hill and look at the bush below him and tell the quantity of matai and miro there was in it?—No. When asked to report on the timbers in certain areas I found it hopeless to expect to be able to do it accurately, and so I simply reported what I thought would be an estimate of 1 acre, and then reckoned the whole area from that.

13. *The Chairman.*] It might happen under some estimates that when the bush was taken out there would only be in it half the timber estimated, or two or three times as much?—Quite so; because a lot of the timber included in the estimate might be absolutely worthless.

14. *Dr. Cockayne.*] What would you call the birch at Oxford?—Black—*Solandri*.

15. What do they call it in Wellington?—I have never heard it referred to there. Not much grows there.

16. How far north does it grow?—In Auckland, but it is very rare. I have seen it on Tutumohe Range.

17. Do you know *fusca*?—Only as "brown-birch"; in Marlborough chiefly.

18. Do you know *Menziesii*?—The "red-birch."

19. Where is it called that?—In Marlborough.

20. Have you ever seen any *fusca* in Canterbury?—There may be a little at Glynnwyne, but you would have to search to find it.

21. Have you had any experience of *fusca* as a timber?—Only watching the mills cut it. It is used in Marlborough for rough building, but it twists a lot unless seasoned before cutting.

22. Have you had any experience with black-birch?—Yes, but that also is liable to twist, while the tannic acid is very hard on the saws. It is suitable for bridge-building, but not for houses.

23. Have you had any experience with *Menziesii*?—Only when I had it seasoned for making furniture. It takes a very nice polish.

24. *Mr. Murdoch.*] What formula did you use in measuring up round timber?—I used Hopper's generally. We would square one-fourth of the girth, take the length, and then the cubic contents. Multiply by 12 to get the superficial contents. Here timber is sold off the saw.

HENRY GAUNT PRICE sworn and examined. (No. 24.)

1. *The Chairman.*] In the absence of the Commissioner you have charge of the Lands Office here?—Yes.

2. Have any complaints been received from the settlers that some of the scenic reserves have been set apart in unsuitable places, and have become breeding-grounds for noxious weeds, &c.?—I do not remember any particular case of that kind. A sum of money is voted every year for the destruction of weeds, and when a Ranger reports that noxious weeds are spreading they are destroyed. I do not think your question applies to the scenery reserves here. In a treeless place like Canterbury, where we have forests we should preserve them. We should not deforest here.

3. Have you had any experience with deer here?—No. I was in Hawke's Bay, and there are deer at Lake Waikaremoana; but I never heard they had any bad effect on the forest.

4. Before coming here you had many years' experience in bush country as a surveyor?—Yes, principally in Hawke's Bay and Poverty Bay.

5. Is there any tawa timber there?—A considerable amount. It has not been used for sawmilling purposes, and I never heard of its being regarded as good building-timber. It is not lasting, but would do for butter-boxes.

6. *Dr. Cockayne.*] What does the forest at Motu consist of?—Pines—rimu, kahikatea, miro. There is not much beech in it. You will find that timber on the high ranges.