

APPENDIX E.

SOME NOTES ON TROUNSON KAURI PARK.

In the year 1900 the Government, recognizing that the kauri forests in the Northern Wairoa district were rapidly diminishing as a result of timber-milling operations, decided to conserve as a scenic reserve an area of about 8 acres of Crown land situated at the head of the Kaihu Valley. This area contained some very fine specimens of kauri-trees, one giant tree having a circumference of 78 ft. with a diameter of 26 ft. at the base, the height to the first branch being 75 ft. Unfortunately, this tree was destroyed owing to a fire which entered the forest, and it soon became apparent that in order to conserve the forest for the benefit of future generations a larger area would have to be set aside as a scenic reserve.

Adjoining the reserve was a considerable area of very fine kauri forest which had been acquired by Mr. James Trounson for milling purposes, and he, being in full sympathy with the project of conserving the forest, generously transferred to the Government an area of about 41 acres, receiving in exchange its equivalent in timber in another part of the district.

Later Mr. Trounson made a direct gift to the Government of a further 12 acres of forest land, containing many magnificent specimens of giant kauris, and this was added to the park.

By this time, with the exception of about 900 acres of forest land adjoining the park and owned by Mr. Trounson, the timber resources of the Northern Wairoa were almost exhausted, and active measures were taken by the Scenic Preservation Club, which had been formed in the district, in conjunction with the local bodies, to secure this great national asset to the general public. Mr. James Trounson came forward with a further generous offer to dispose of this area to the Government at half the assessed marketable value of the timber, and making a gift of the land, which offer was readily availed of by the Government.

On the 29th November, 1921, His Excellency the Governor-General, Viscount Jellicoe, accompanied by Lady Jellicoe, visited the park, and, in the presence of a large assemblage, accepted from Mr. Trounson, on behalf of the people of New Zealand, the title-deeds, and named the forest "Trounson Kauri Park," thereby perpetuating the memory of one of New Zealand's public benefactors.

It has been necessary to take all possible steps to safeguard the forest from destruction by fire, and consequently further areas, mostly open land, have been added to the park, until the total area now under reservation for scenic purposes is 1,080 acres 2 roods, 16 perches.

A large amount has been expended in constructing access roads and providing tracks through the forest, and with these facilities the park is becoming increasingly popular with tourists and others, and the number of visitors increases yearly. Fire-breaks have been provided by ploughing a belt of land around the park and sowing same in suitable grasses, which has been the means of greatly minimizing the risk of fires entering the forest. Up to the 31st March last the expenditure on the park had reached the sum of £46,398, of which amount £40,000 represents the compensation paid to Mr. Trounson on account of the value of the timber.

The park lies five or six miles north of Kaihu, with Mangonui Bluff away to the left. The rail to Donnelly's Crossing, or Aranga, brings visitors within easy distance of the park, access tracks to the heart of the forest having been provided.

Visitors to Trounson Kauri Park who have had the opportunity of visiting most of the principal kauri forests describe this park as containing the finest specimens of kauri in New Zealand. Whether in size, height, or environment, there is nothing to equal it anywhere. Viewed from a neighbouring hill overlooking the park the forest appears to be all kauri, as there is nothing to be seen over practically the whole expanse but the tops of kauri-trees. Upon entering the forest, however, many varieties of smaller trees are to be found in profusion, thereby adding to the charm of the forest. Above all, the kauri lifts its massive branches, forming an almost continuous canopy.

The park is under the able supervision of Mr. R. M. Donaldson as caretaker, who spares no pains in protecting the forest from destruction by fire or otherwise, and in affording every assistance to visitors desirous of seeing the scenic beauties of the park.

Recently has come the news of the lamented death of Mr. James Trounson, the benefactor whose name is so closely associated with this park. He was endowed with a gentle and kindly disposition combined with an unassuming manner, which commanded the respect of all with whom he came in contact. The remark made by him at the ceremony in connection with the naming of the park is typical of his whole life. "I am not young in years, and if I am going to give any one pleasure I had better start," he said. "This bush has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life, and I would like to pass on that pleasure to the generations to come. If my gift will give pleasure to the people, and if it inspires gratitude to the Giver of all good, I shall be well repaid."