

The forest on the Hawea has been greatly encroached upon by saw-mills and sawyers, and about 400 acres have recently been destroyed by fire. It consists entirely of black, white, and red birch, and where it has not been destroyed, the quality of the timber is equal to any in the interior. Area, about 4,000 acres.

The Matukituki forest consists of excellent white, black, and red birch. It is still in its natural state, and covers an area of 10,000 acres.

On the Dart River, about 40,000 acres of the same kinds of birch still retains its natural condition.

The Ling forest, on the west shore of Lake Wakatip, contains an area of 6,500 acres. Has been in possession of saw-millers and bush-cutters for about ten years. It consists of black, white, and red birch; also, a few pines and totaras, but these are generally of a stunted and inferior nature.

The Rees, Mount Alfred, and Greenstone forests contain about 15,500 acres, of which that at Mount Alfred is the most accessible. They consist of the usual kinds of birch, and have not been yet encroached upon.

The Bald Hill forest contains about 7,000 acres, and being at an altitude of 2,500 feet, the birch is generally of a light and inferior nature.

The Mavora contains 12,000 acres of birch forest, generally light and stunted, and still in its natural state.

Burwood contains about 2,500 acres of excellent birch forest, accessible, and is now the property of the Otago University.

The Dunton forest contains 120,000 acres of red, white, and black birch, of all qualities, and about 300 acres have recently been destroyed by fire. It is situated near the valley of the Mararoa; but will be of little value to the population until settlement extends farther inland.

The Margin, Eglinton, and the forests west of the Te Anau and Manipori Lakes contain about 176,000 acres of superior birch timber, but these extensive forests are too far inland to be of any value to the population for many years to come.

It will thus be seen that there are in the

Hawera district	..	..	..	..	..	15,000 acres.
Matukituki ..	..	..	..	..	..	10,000 "
Wakatip ..	..	..	..	..	..	62,150 "
Dunton ..	..	..	..	..	..	141,500 "
Te Anau ..	..	..	..	..	..	176,000 "

Making a total of .. .. 404,650 acres.

There is a large quantity of superior timber in the Matukituki; a considerable area of heavy timbered land between the Rees and Dart Rivers; and a large quantity of heavy timber at the southern extremity of the Te Anau Lake, and along the right bank of the Waiau.

All those extensive birch forests in the interior are generally situated along the base of high precipitous mountains, in most instances facing the east, which shelter them from the south-west, or prevailing wind. The birch is seldom found growing on flat, open country in the interior. I am therefore of opinion that it will not grow to any degree of perfection in exposed situations, and possibly this accounts for its being found in such abundance in those mountainous regions, where it is generally sheltered from the prevailing wind. It grows to a considerable size up to the high elevation of 2,500 feet above the level of the sea, but what grows above that altitude is of a stunted and scrubby nature. It grows in this diminutive form up to the extraordinary altitude of 3,500 feet above the sea, and preserves this level along the face of the range of mountains.

The red birch is a handsome, well-formed tree, straight in the trunk, and grows to considerable dimensions. It varies in size from 6 inches to 4 feet in diameter, and from 80 to 100 feet in height; it generally grows on dry, loamy soil and in sheltered situations. This timber is extensively used at the Wakatip for house-building; it is also well adapted for engineering purposes. It is of a durable nature, and lasts well in the ground; but unfortunately this wood is subject to rot in the centre of the tree, which renders the proportion of timber suitable for sawing purposes in a forest, very limited. This is very evident from the fact of a saw-mill of 12 horse-power, belonging to Messrs. Robertson and Co., of Long Forest, Lake Wakatip, having used all the sound timber on an area of 1,600 acres in ten years, the frontage to one-third back being only available for sawing purposes. There is a large quantity of heavy timber still growing on the ground, and the trees would seem perfectly sound and healthy to any one inexperienced in the defect to which this timber is so very subject.

The black birch tree is similar in size and appearance to the red, but is not so much used, nor does it last so long in the ground.

The white birch tree is generally stunted and light. Of the three kinds of birch, this is the most inferior, and may be considered to be almost useless; lasts only two or three years in the ground. It is generally used on the gold fields for props or some temporary construction.

Birch is the prevailing timber in the interior. An occasional pine and totara may be found, but these seldom obtain such large growth, nor is the timber of such a superior quality as that which grows at lower elevations, or near the sea coast.

The following are the queries, and the answers given:—

Under the head of acreage destroyed, the area can only be taken as approximate. The