

Exaggerated statements have been made as to the quantity of timber contained in this forest, some of them ranging above 600,000,000 superficial feet. My examination of the forest was not sufficiently complete to allow of my forming more than an approximate calculation, but I am not inclined to estimate it at above 300,000,000 superficial feet. At the low royalty of 3d. per 100ft. paid by the Southland sawmillers, this would give £45,000 as the value of the standing timber. For the present it should be strictly preserved, and the services of E. Erunehua might be advantageously retained for this purpose.

OMAHUTA

The Omahuta Block comprises 7,800 acres, situate near the head of the Maungakama River, Hokianga Harbour. Its greatest length is from north to south, about six miles, and its greatest breadth about two and a half miles from east to west.

A large quantity of kauri occurs on various parts of the block, and in some parts the trees are of large dimensions. Where kauri does not predominate most of the forest is of a mixed character. Large portions of the block are open manuka or fern, especially on the extreme northern and southern portions.

Puriri (*Vitex littoralis*) occurs but sparingly on the block, although it is plentiful on the low grounds by the river. Toatoa (*Phyllocladus glauca*) is frequent in a few places.

A few fine specimens of the manoao (*Dacrydium Kirkii*) were observed in various parts of the forest, some of them with trunks three feet in diameter. The tanekaha was of more frequent occurrence, and the southern palm (*Rhopalostylis sapida*) exhibited great luxuriance.

The Omahuta Creek rises near the north-east corner of the block, and runs in a south-westerly direction through the middle portion. The southern portion is drained chiefly by the Pukekohe, which joins the main creek near the boundary of the block. As both creeks have numerous tributaries, the greater portion of the timber could be got out with but little difficulty.

The proportion of young kauri in various parts of the block is unusually large. Two sections of considerable extent consisted chiefly of rickers, which ought to be carefully preserved. A large quantity of kauri is growing close to the main creek, forming a tolerably compact block of about a mile square or more. Large quantities are growing on the banks of the Pukekohe. The total quantity on the block may be roughly estimated at 40,000,000 superficial feet, but much higher figures were named.

Large quantities of timber on this block have been destroyed by fires caused by kauri-gum-diggers. At the date of my visit at least forty diggers, chiefly Natives, were working on this and adjacent blocks without paying anything in the shape of royalty. I was informed that large quantities of gum had been taken from Crown lands in the district during the last two or three years.

WAIKOROPU.

This block adjoins the Omahuta Forest, and is of similar character, but the proportion of trees of large dimensions is somewhat greater. In one or two places large trees averaged four or five to the acre, and would give a return of from 50,000 to 55,000 superficial feet. The total quantity would be much larger than in the Omahuta Block. The timber could be got out of the forest with but little trouble.

KAUAEORURUWAHINE.

This forest block is situated on the West Coast, on the southern margin of Whangape Harbour, and comprises 12,800 acres, of which 4,660 acres on the eastern side have been set apart as a forest reserve. On the western side it abuts on the sea-beach, except where it is bounded by Native reserves.

The block is much broken, in many places running up to sharp ridges 1,200ft. to 1,500ft. high; in the folds of which clumps of good kauri extend over from five to twenty or thirty acres, being scattered in this way over the greater portion of the western side, and forming patches of greater size in wide hollows. I am not able to give even an approximate estimate of the total quantity, and owing to continuous heavy rain was unable to reach the eastern side of the block, where the kauri is said to be remarkably fine and abundant. The position is very difficult of access, and it is unlikely that this block will be indented upon for some years to come. The outlet will be into Whangape Harbour; but I fear it will be difficult to get the logs into the water.

The block was being worked for kauri-gum, I believe by Natives exclusively. Fully a dozen huts were observed in different parts of the block, and, judging from the state of the track, a large quantity of gum must have been taken out. It is only fair to say that Maori diggers are far more careful with regard to fire than Europeans; no trees have been destroyed by fire in the Kauaeoruruwahine.

TURUA.

The Turua Sawmills are situate on the River Thames, at the margin of a grand kahikatea forest, the property of Messrs. Bagnall and Co.

It is scarcely possible to imagine a greater contrast between any two kinds of forest than that afforded by the kauri and kahikatea. The straight close-set trunks of the white-pine have but little top, and the greyish-green foliage closely resembles that of a cypress. The massive columns of the kauri often carry a large much-branched head, clothed with large coriaceous green leaves. In Messrs. Bagnall's bush the trees grow closely together, averaging from 40ft. to 50ft. long, and from 2ft. to 3ft. in diameter. The average yield per acre is fully 25,000ft. Mr. Bagnall informed me that in some parts of the forest the return was from 75,000 to 120,000 feet per acre.