

1886.

NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE FORESTS AND THE STATE OF THE
TIMBER TRADE

(REPORT ON), BY T. KIRK, F.L.S., CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF STATE FORESTS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

PART II.

HAWKE'S BAY.

THE Provincial District of Hawke's Bay occupies the middle portion of the east coast of the North Island, and ascends from sea-level to the crests of the Ruahine Mountains, which in many places are covered with forest up to 4,000ft. The area of the district is 2,740,000 acres, of which about 479,928 acres are more or less covered with forest; 225,870 acres being in the hands of the Crown, and 254,058 acres held by the Natives.

From a valuable statement furnished by Mr. H. Baker, Commissioner of Crown Lands, I take the following, showing the disposition of forest lands held by the Crown, and the area of Native forest leased to Europeans:—

Forest lands held by the Crown*	...	...	125,000 acres
Forest reserves for climatic purposes	...	...	87,278 "
Educational reserves clothed with bush, not occupied, vested in Board of School Commissioners	...	...	13,592 "
			<hr/> 225,870 "
Forest lands in the hands of Natives	...	...	214,272 "
Forest lands leased by Natives to Europeans	...	...	39,786 "
			<hr/> 254,058 "

The Hawke's Bay forests have for many years been famous for the high quality of their totara, which was supposed to occur in such abundance that it was said to be inexhaustible. The excessive destruction which seems inseparable from the rapid extension of settlement, and the increased facilities for conversion afforded by the development of railway communication, have caused a vast diminution of the forest resources of the district; so that the conversion of this fine timber, second only to the kauri in value, will practically come to an end within the next decade.

DISTRIBUTION OF FORESTS.

The forests are distributed in a very unequal manner, the greater portion occupying the south and south-western portion of the district. A line drawn from Cape Kidnappers due west to the Ruahine Mountains would divide the district into two parts, of which the southern is the larger, and contains the chief forest areas.

In the northern part, the Kaimanawa Forest occupies the north-western corner, with the Pukitiri and Pohui Bushes lying a little to the south-east, and two or three outlying patches on the northern boundary; the total area of wood-land being very small when compared with that of the southern portion.

Immediately to the south of the imaginary line the lower slopes of the Ruahine Mountains are clothed with forest, which at first is of no great width, although in one or two places it extends to the lower ground; but opposite Takapau it becomes about sixteen miles in width, and gradually expands until it reaches the sea on the southern side of Cape Turnagain, exhibiting a roughly-

* 59,000 acres of forest land held by the Crown are in course of preparation for sale and settlement.