

the work of the complete destruction of the remaining valueless timber and laying the areas down in grass. If the holdings are then judiciously stocked, grazed, and looked after, there is every possibility of the settlers obtaining a living therefrom.

These suggestions will, no doubt, be considered revolutionary and altogether contrary to the views of those who advocate conservation of forest and preservation of scenery, but as I claim to have always been in the front rank of enthusiasts and workers to this end, I can only say that I have been forced to the above conclusion by actual observation and from a conviction that *bonâ fide* settlement is the first consideration in New Zealand, and that we should do everything in our power to improve the position of settlers and to meet their altered requirements, and also generally to bring about the expansion, development, and progress of settlement and the increase of productions to the utmost limit throughout the whole colony. This can be done, and yet ample provision made for maintaining sufficient of our unique forests, fauna, and scenery for the enjoyment of the colonists, and to continue to attract large numbers of Australians annually to our shores.

The total receipts on account of the sale of timber amounted to £30,948, of which £13,739 was derived from Crown forests and £17,209 from State forests. The amount standing to the credit of the State Forests Account on the 31st March last was £32,672.

"The Scenery Preservation Act, 1903," passed during last year, provides for the appointment of a Commission, comprising not more than five persons, who are required to report upon all lands possessing scenic or historic interest, or on which there are thermal springs, and to recommend suitable reservations of such areas. The Act also authorises the setting aside and reservation of such lands, and the fencing and preservation thereof. There is also power to take Native and freehold lands for the purposes of the Act under the provisions of "The Public Works Act, 1894."

To enable the aforesaid reservations to be effected and the requisite land to be purchased, the sum of £100,000 is authorised to be expended at the rate of £25,000 a year.

Reserves made under the Act may be vested in a local authority or a special Board. Penalties are provided in case of interference with or damage to the reserves.

The Commission appointed in terms of the Act comprised the following members: Messrs. S. Percy Smith, F.R.G.S. (Chairman); J. W. A. Marchant, Surveyor-General; H. J. Matthews, Chief Forester; Major Tunuiarangi, Wairarapa; and W. W. Smith, Ashburton.

MILLING-TIMBER.

The kauri forests of the North received special attention during the past twelve months. Closer inspections and valuations were made by selected persons under the direction of Major Lusk, whose estimate of the Crown kauri timber is about 448,000,000 superficial feet. This is a considerable reduction upon all previous estimates. It is computed that in addition to the Crown's property in kauri there are about 664,000,000 superficial feet of kauri upon freehold and Native lands. This gives a gross total of about 1,112,000,000 superficial feet.

It will be interesting to consider the position of the industry in the Auckland District, and the following are a few figures which have been quoted upon the subject: Last year there were about thirty-six kauri mills, with an estimated annual cutting-capacity of 195,000,000 superficial feet. The output for the year was 144,000,000 superficial feet. If the present output of kauri is maintained, the supply would be exhausted in about eight years.

This greatly reduced estimate of the quantity of kauri timber causes an undoubted sense of disappointment, if not alarm; but it is most satisfactory to be able to report that the rimu, matai, and totara forests in the North are now found to contain a quantity of timber far in excess of previous anticipations. Major Lusk's preliminary investigations have not been completed in the East and West Taupo Counties, but there is every reason to believe that in these districts and in various other parts of the Auckland Land District additional supplies of the above classes of timber will be found, besides those amounts given in the schedule on the following page.

The quantities of other timbers upon Crown lands within the Auckland Land District, with the exceptions above stated, are: Rimu, 954,000,000 superficial feet; kahikatea, 159,000,000 superficial feet; totara, 164,000,000 superficial feet; matai, 99,000,000 superficial feet; miscellaneous and inferior timbers, 30,000,000 superficial feet. This gives a gross total of about 1,854,000,000 superficial feet. Taking Crown, Native, and freehold lands together, the estimated quantity of timber of all kinds is 7,465,000,000 superficial feet. This, it is hoped, will be supplemented by the remaining forests in the Taupo and other districts.

Major Lusk also states that the sawmillers in the North are giving more attention to the conversion of other classes of timber than kauri, and he very properly urges that they should be required to cut out all varieties of timber in any bush they operate on, instead of being allowed as heretofore to cut only kauri. It has long been the practice in other districts to insist that sawmillers shall not pass over or waste any millable or marketable timber within their sawmill areas. By this means it is hoped that the great milling industry of the North will be maintained, that