

a portion of it being nearly level land, containing magnificent timber, principally rimu, matai, totara, maire, and other pines. This forest is as yet hardly touched, though timber is being cut at Raetihi for the settlers now making their homes in the neighbourhood. A very efficiently equipped Government sawmill has been working at Kakahi for some time, and supplying all the totara required by the Public Works Department for the railway-works in the vicinity; and a sawmill at Piriaka is cutting bush on a Native reserve.

There is a large extent of bush land, drained by the Turakina, Mangamahu, and Wangaehu Rivers, extending up to the Wanganui River, and containing about 300,000 acres. Very little of this, from its inaccessibility, will be utilised for sawmilling purposes; but a great deal of it, together with a further block of 230,000 acres on the west side of the Wanganui River, will be cleared by the settlers and sown down with grass. A further block of about 100,000 acres of forest land lies in the Pohangina Valley and on the slopes of the Ruahine Range. A large portion of this has been taken up, and is now being settled.

The Awarua Block, extending on both sides of the Rangitikei River and to the summit of the dividing range, is covered with heavy bush on the lower slopes. The portion which has been sold by the Government for settlement purposes is being cleared by the settlers; but there is a large amount of very valuable milling-timber still standing in the neighbourhood of Taihape, where several sawmills are busily engaged. The timber on the east side of the Rangitikei River, reserved for milling by the Crown, is untouched. (A photograph of the Awarua Forest appears opposite.)

The forest land on the west coast extends from Pukerua to the Manawatu Gorge, on the west side of the Tararua Range, and contains an area of about 300,000 acres, the bulk of it being fit only for turning into pasture. The most available part of it, alongside the Wellington-Manawatu Railway, is being extensively cut into by sawmillers at Levin and other places on the line.

After this in size is the forest on the eastern slopes of the Tararua Ranges, extending from Feathers-ton to the Manawatu Gorge, which includes what remains of the well-known Forty-mile Bush, containing probably about 175,000 acres. This area is being quickly denuded of timber by sawmillers and by settlers. A tract of about 50,000 acres lying to the east of the Puketoi Range cannot be utilised for milling purposes, as it is not tapped by any branch railway-line, and its distance from the main line would probably render the business unprofitable except for local purposes. Nor are there any suitable ports along the coast where timber could be shipped.

The other forests are, one near Lake Taupo, and the Haurangi Forest on the east side of the Wairarapa Lake. The former contains some valuable milling-timber, principally matai and maire; and the latter consists for the most part of beech-covered hills, and cannot be considered as valuable for milling purposes.

Sawmills are to be found in different parts of the district where the means to convey the timber from the forests are sufficient and not too costly, the timber cut being principally totara, red-pine (rimu), and white-pine (kahikatea): the first two are largely used in house-construction, bridge-building, and other works, and the last for butter-boxes and export to Australia, for similar use there. Others of the native woods are very beautiful, but are utilised only to a small extent.

The principal mills are near Eketahuna, for the Forty-mile Bush and Wairarapa districts; at Otaki and Shannon, in the Manawatu district; and at Taihape, Raetihi, and Taumarunui, in the interior country. There are also mills and factories in Wellington and other towns for dressing the rough material. In the whole district there were, at the census of 1906, 98 mills and sash and door factories engaged in this industry, employing 1,611 persons.

Mr. A. M. Roberts reports as follows on the Te Tuhi, Ahuahu, and Puketotara Blocks:—

The forest is of a varied description. Owing to the broken nature of the land, very few of the more valuable trees are found on it. At the higher altitudes, particularly where the spurs are at all flat-topped, the northern rata is growing in abundance. Where the spurs are sharply defined the tawhai rauriki is the chief tree. Below these two species one finds the tawa, tawhero, rewarewa, maire, manuka raurika, miro toromiro, hinau, titoki, pukatea, &c., interspersed with a number of trees of lesser degree, such as horopito, kotukutuku, horoeke, lancewood, mahoe, honi, toro, mapau, milk-tree, and an undergrowth of rangiora, karamu, supplejack, &c. On the few flats, and where the country is more undulating, will be found a few totaras, rimus, matais, and kahikatea. These four latter species are, however, in very small quantity, and hardly sufficient for settlers' needs. Undoubtedly the chief fencing-material in this locality will be the tawhai rauriki, which is growing in abundance, and, if properly seasoned, will be found to have great lasting qualities. On the western sides of the blocks an area of 100 acres has been reserved, mainly consisting of northern rata. It will, in years to come, be valuable as a means of burning papa, there being no road-material in the district.

In speaking of forest timbers it may not be out of place to mention the pitau punga. This is a variety of the well-known punga fern-tree. The Maoris use it for the studs of their *wharepunis*, for which purpose it outlasts all other known timbers. Some of these *wharepunis* have been standing for upwards of fifty years, and their studs are as sound now, or even sounder, than when first put in the ground. A great many of their whares are also built of this timber. The larger trees are selected for this purpose. After being cut down, they are sawn into strips or slabs, each strip being about 12 ft. to 15 ft. long, 7 in. in breadth, and 2 in. deep. A few days ago I personally inspected a whare built of this material. It has been standing for upwards of thirty years, and its slabs and posts are still as hard as concrete. The Maoris assure me that it is vastly superior to totara for lasting purposes, and freely assert that it will stand for one hundred years or more. In confirmation of this statement, it is a noteworthy fact that nearly all their graves are marked by four pitau posts. From inquiries made, the pitau punga is usually cut down when about twenty-five years of age, the heart is at that time very