

Ruahine Range, in the north-western corner. The centre of the district is intersected by the Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges, and towards the east coast by the Haurangi, Maungaraki, Puketoi, and Wae-waepa Ranges; the whole are more or less covered with native indigenous forest trees and shrubs.

The indigenous forest trees of economic value in the various ranges named are totara, rimu, matai, kahikatea, tawhero, tawa, tawhai, pukatea, maire, rata, hinau, miro, rewarewa. The smaller trees and shrubs of less economic value, but of value for scenery and water-conservation purposes, are: tarata, mahoe, konini, horoeaka, akeake, ngaio, mapau, makomako, ramarama, manuka, &c.

The major portion of forest lands in this portion of the district are situated on the verge of the settled lands along the lower slopes of the ranges, and are practically without access, and, owing to the steep and broken nature of the lands, cannot be considered to contain timber of extra value for milling purposes. On the lower slopes of the ranges, in the various forest reserves, there may be some available milling-timber, but, as it is scattered throughout the whole of the district, it is impossible to give an approximate estimate of the quantities of the various forest trees of economic value.

Mr. Assistant Surveyor T. A. Johnston reports on the timber trees in the Ruatiti and Mangatiti Blocks:—

These blocks furnish a great variety of classes of bush, from manuka flats along the two main streams from which the blocks take their names, to birch spurs on the steeper and higher points, with all the differing grades of heavily timbered flats, tawa sidlings, and tawhero ridges. But although there are many good trees of the more useful kinds, such as matai, rimu, kahikatea, &c., yet the bush could not be called milling-bush, for the small clumps of these trees are too scattered, and the country too broken, to allow of them being collected at a mill at reasonable cost, and, besides, the mills themselves would have to be so far from a market, or good means of communication with a market. There will be plenty of good timber for the requirements of incoming settlers—for fences, yards, outbuildings, &c.—but that is all.

*Totara*.—There are only a very few scattered totaras here, and many of these are not sound.

*Matai*.—There is a fair sprinkling of good matai, mostly on the small river-flats, and as the roads, and consequently the homestead-sites, are for the most part on these, this timber will be very handy for building purposes.

*Maire*.—There are a fair number of these trees widely distributed throughout both blocks. This wood is very useful where hardness is required, as for mauls, and some parts of bridge-work, but is very hard to work. It is also much used for firewood.

*Rata*.—This is the largest and most widely distributed tree we have. Having developed from vines, these trees are generally hollow, and often twisty and knotty, so are hard to work, and are little used except for firewood when dry. It is very plentiful and very hard, and might make good blocks for street-paving.

*Rimu*.—This is our most beautiful timber tree, and though we have some fine trees of this variety, yet it does not occur in any patches large enough to be payable to mill at this distance from a market.

*Kahikatea*.—Kahikatea is also plentiful, but is confined more to the river-flats, where there are some splendid specimens.

*Miro*.—There is very little miro here, and what trees there are are not very large. This timber lasts fairly well when not exposed to too much weather, and is often sold for better timber. The gum from miro, even in its raw state, is a splendid adhesive, and suggests that, if it were experimented with, it might supply an article to beat many now on the market.

*Hinau*.—There are a few hinaus, mostly scattered along the ridges. This timber lasts well in the ground, and so makes good strainers, but is very heavy and tough to work. Out of its bark the Maoris make a good permanent black dye.

*Rewarewa*.—These trees also, like hinaus, are mostly found along the ridges. There are a good number here, but they are of little use where they cannot conveniently be got at, for cabinet-work and the like.

*Tūtōki*.—There are very few of these trees here. They are the toughest wood we have, and are useful for such articles as swingle-trees.

Our most plentiful trees are tawa and tawhero, but neither of these woods is turned to any use in this district. We have also a few pukatea, of which the same can be said.

Our underscrub consists chiefly of mahoe, karamu, rangiora, makomako, toru, matapo, akeake, manuka, tutu, &c., and is very much entangled with vines, mostly supplejacks. Of these, the only ones I have seen used extensively are supplejacks, which I have seen being made into coal-baskets in Dunedin. I believe that many of our shrubs, if properly tested, will be found to have powerful medicinal properties. Rangiora and tutu will at certain times of the year poison stock. Koromiko-leaves and manuka-berries are used in the bush as a costive medicine. Also many of our trees have permanent dyes, and the Maoris make a good permanent brown dye out of the bark of brown-birch (tawhai), also a good permanent black dye out of hinau-bark. They also use many native berries for small quantities of brighter but less permanent dyes. The barks of some trees, such as tawhero, might, if tested, be found useful for tanning.

There is a splendid belt of milling-timber between Raetihi and Rangataua, and extending from there along the flats right up past Makatote. There are now, to my knowledge, ten mills working between Raetihi and Rangataua, and though further north the matai, kahikatea, &c., give place to kaikawaka and yellow-pine, yet these latter are also good timber, the last being considered by many as little inferior to totara for lasting either above or below ground, while the other is a splendid timber to work, and lasts pretty well out of the ground. The heavy birch timber, too, around Karioi lasts fairly well in a dry climate.