

Timber-supplies—Position and Outlook.—In December, 1923, a supplementary report of the timber-supplies, position and outlook, in the North Island, with particular reference to the Tongariro concessions, was prepared, and a copy is appended herewith. The position thus disclosed is briefly as follows :—

Present position : For the year ended 31st March, 1928, the output of sawn timber in the North Island was approximately 150,000,000 sup. ft., and the chief contributing district for the particular species—viz., totara and matai—are the Main Trunk and Rotorua regions. It is considered that within a few years production will diminish in these regions.

Future outlook : The wood requirements of Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, and Wellington Provinces must come from the Main Trunk region, and, as the end of available supplies within economic tramming distance of the Main Trunk Railway is in sight, the Tongariro area must be considered as the chief future source of supply of totara and matai, if it can be produced at a price in competition with imported redwood, cedar, &c., which will involve a reduction in the selling-price of approximately 30 per cent. The Auckland market will also have an important bearing upon the marketing of timber from this area, particularly in view of the rapid exhaustion of kauri resources.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 1929.

PRELIMINARY.

The Chairman : I will ask you, gentlemen, to state your names, and the interests you represent, as the evidence will be taken down.

Mr. W. H. Grace : As far as I am concerned, sir, I represent myself as an owner, and I represent the Grace party, who are both owners and have large interests in the Tongariro Timber Co., and I also represent quite a big section of the Native owners. So far as those Native owners are concerned, I may say that I represent the majority of the Native owners. I represent the majority of the Native owners, the Grace party, and my own particular section.

The Chairman : I think it is right that at this stage I should read a telegram that I have received with reference to this matter of representation. It is from Mr. John Cullen, and is as follows : " Very many owners, including myself, seriously object Tongariro Timber Co. being granted any further time or concessions. Also notify you that W. Grace has no authority to appear before your Committee on our behalf."

Mr. W. H. Grace : Of course, I do not claim to represent Mr. John Cullen. I do not think he is of any consequence at all. Mr. Cullen is well known to the Native Minister, and to the ex Native Minister.

Mr. H. Hampson : I represent the Native owners not represented by Mr. Grace. Mr. Grace has said that he represents the majority of the Native owners. I do not desire to join issue with him on that point, because we are not at loggerheads over this matter at the present time ; but, as the Hon. the Minister knows, I think I can claim to represent the great majority of the Ngati Tuwharetoa on this matter.

The Chairman : Is there anybody representing the Tongariro Co. ?

Mr. W. H. Grace : Yes. Mr. D. M. Findlay, who represents the Tongariro Timber Co., is at present at another parliamentary Committee. He will be here presently.

Hon. Sir Apirana Ngata : Who represents the syndicate ?

Mr. W. H. Grace : The representatives of the syndicate will be Mr. Findlay and myself. Mr. Duncan, the manager and organizer, is away at present, but he will be here in Wellington on Thursday.

Mr. J. B. Murdoch : I represent the interests of the Egmont Box Co.

Dr. Chapple : I am here in the interests of some of the English creditors, to whom is owing the £35,000.

Mr. A. J. Seed : I represent the Dominion Federation Sawmillers' Association.

Mr. C. M. Malfroy : Mr. Raich and myself represent the State Forest Service.

Mr. H. HAMPSON examined. (No. 1.)

The Chairman.] Will you now proceed, Mr. Hampson ?—Well, Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief, because all I have to say with regard to what has occurred in the past has been said before before this Committee, and it is on record. At the request of the then Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Mr. Coates, I gave evidence before the last Native Affairs Committee. Briefly, I just desire to say now that I would like you to bear in mind that this is a matter between the owners of this land—in which the Natives have a three-quarters and the Crown a one-quarter interest—and the Tongariro Timber Co., and that the other parties interested, particularly the creditors, should be subordinate to those interests. I am materially interested in this matter myself on behalf of the Natives who have waited so long to have their rights attended to, as is set out in the printed statement which is before you. During the last ten years I have appeared before you at different times on behalf of these Natives, and I do not propose now to go further into that aspect of the matter. The position now briefly is this : In February of this year, at a large meeting at Tokaanu, at which the Hon.