

# HEART OF NORTH ISLAND

## WHOLESALE FOREST DESTRUCTION.

### CALL FOR SALVAGE

**A** MOST pressing and urgent call for a halt and a right-about turn on the march of forest destruction comes from the King Country, and in fact, all the high country along the Main Trunk Line between the Waipa Valley and the headwaters of the Wanganui. Ever-increasing raids are being made by sawmillers on forest that should never be touched under the methods of felling and waste that prevail at present. So, too, with the highlands between Taumarunui and Lake Taupo.

Some day a sane and intelligent system of forestry will be evolved which will use and cultivate and regenerate the native timbers everywhere, instead of sweeping them away. At present, all is destruction without regeneration. There is a desperate rush here, there, and everywhere, to get the bush down, and turn it into cash. The forests that belong to the nation are simply given over to the sawmillers, who are not required to make good the damage they do. The country is simply living on its forest capital; this is disappearing like the water that vanishes down a bare hillside, and there is nothing to show for it but plantations of exotic pines; more often nothing but a devastated landscape given over to scrub and weeds.

### NO REPLACEMENT.

The heart of the King Country, in and about the Rangitoto Ranges, broken country, that should never have been stripped of forest, has been partly denuded of the greater part of its valuable forests, and the work of removal without replacement goes on. Very little appears in the newspapers about these operations; and the Forest Service has been silent about its share in the work.

Are we to take it that for the last quarter of a century it has been quite indifferent to the evil consequences of this forest-destruction in a territory that will never grow anything so well as it grows the native timbers? It certainly would appear that the Service either does not realize the damage that has been done or is

quite willing to see the native forest disappear in order that it may do a bit of exotic tree-planting; this in spite of the notoriously poor value of such trees for timber purposes as compared with the indigenous woods.

### THE GOVERNMENT'S GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY.

Settlers have felled and burned bush there on thousands of acres that have since reverted to scrub and fern with the added curse of ragwort. But the greatest destructive agent has been and is, the sawmiller, who is encouraged by the Government to hurry off for sale and export timber that should be cherished and guarded as the indispensable garment of the country. It does not matter whether it is native land or other privately-owned land, or whether it is land that is the property of the *STATE*. The sweeping away embraces all classes of land. No effort has been made to hold for the *STATE* land that should never have been parted with. Compensations to private owners would be a trifle by comparison with the enormous national value of the standing bush.

### THE THREAT TO THE RIVERS.

This heart of the North Island, embracing the country from the Waipa and Mokau to Lake Taupo and down to the headwaters of the Wanganui, is a key watershed. Many rivers take their rise there; the forest is necessary to maintain their flow and to prevent the flooding that has caused destruction in so many other parts of the Island. They are being ruined by the stripping away of their covering; water supply and bush exist together. When the natural protection of the streams and the soil is so ignorantly removed the land is laid open to the ruin that surely will become complete as the years go on.

Climate, the banks of rivers, the water supply of towns, all will suffer. The lamentable effects of plant destruction, so pronounced in the