

the waste of timber under the present system, and the necessity for permanent provision for a continuous supply of timber for mining purposes. "The quantity of timber used in mining operations on the gold fields is very great, and the difficulty of obtaining it in the most important districts is felt to be increasing to an inconvenient degree. The cost of timber for underground drives is now in many instances a very serious item of expenditure, and if this cost were increased to an appreciable extent, it would be likely to have a most damaging effect upon the mining enterprise of the Colony. It is therefore of the utmost importance that steps should be taken to protect and foster the growth of young trees near the gold fields, and, where necessary, to replant the tracts denuded of trees, in order that a constant supply of timber for pit props and other purposes may be easily obtained." The report then treats of the extensive use of soft woods for building purposes, and the importance of introducing pine timber trees into the State forests. It appears that the imports of timber into Victoria in 1853 and 1854 reached the enormous values of £1,474,168 and £1,451,050 respectively. From 1859 to 1866 they represented a fluctuating annual value, ranging from £271,848 to £377,458. From the 1st January, 1852, to the 30th June, 1867, the Colony has expended in the purchase of foreign timber the enormous sum of £8,392,551. Referring to the influence of forests upon climate, the report says:—"It is well known that the clearing of forests in the Alpine districts of France was attended with disastrous consequences: it greatly increased the violence of floods, and decreased the regular supply of water from springs and surface drainage. The excessive degradation of the mountain slopes, caused by the rapid drainage and violence of the floods, since the clearing of the forests in some of these districts, has silted up river beds, and laid waste large areas of fertile land." Many other instances might be cited referring to lands in Spain, in Palestine, and other parts of Asia, and in Northern Africa, that were once fertile and flourishing, and which have now become arid wastes by the destruction of their forests. On the other hand, the aridity of large tracts of land in the Landes and in Algeria has been subdued by the planting of those tracts with forest trees. The report then recommends the control by Commissioners of permanent reserves, and shows that in the State forest reserves the present conditions under which licenses are issued for obtaining timber should be abolished and new conditions imposed, and shows the nature of the new conditions under which licenses should be issued. The following are the approximate areas occupied by forest trees and scrubs in Victoria:—

	Sq. miles.
Large white gums of various kinds (<i>Eucalyptus amygdalina</i> , &c.) ..	5,000
Red gum (<i>Eucalyptus rostrata</i>)	3,000
Stringy-bark and messmate	30,000
Iron-bark	500
Kinds of Eucalyptus of comparative small dimensions—box, yellow box, colonial apple tree, peppermint, &c.	14,000
Light-wood	1,000
Oak, Murray pine	500
Sassafras, beech, and other umbrageous kinds of trees in sheltered mountain gullies	300
Mallee scrub	200
Total	69,000
Extent of open country	18,000

Messmate, red and white gum, and light-wood prevail principally in argillaceous and loamy soils; stringy-bark, iron-bark, box, peppermint, and oak, in sandy and rocky soils; and the mallee scrub only in the arid plains of the north-western districts of the colony. The report then treats of the kinds of forest trees indigenous to Australia which should be cultivated in the forest reserves; of the indigenous trees which should be specially protected; and shows the value of the acacia exported for tanning purposes, amounting to about £12,000 per annum; of the kinds of non-indigenous forest trees which should be cultivated in the forest reserves; the comparative strength and breaking weight of Australian timber; the system recommended for planting and cultivating young trees, and the preliminary expenditure required. "With a view to the creation, maintenance, and renewal of forests of useful foreign and indigenous trees in the several reserves, it would be necessary that a preliminary expenditure of £2,400 be incurred for the erection of necessary fencing, the building of cottages for overseers and woodmen, the purchase of implements, cart horses, working bullocks, &c. The subsequent annual expenditure for general maintenance, purchase of seed, wages, &c., need not, in our opinion, exceed £1,500." A report touching on the subjects stated in the very able and excellent report referred to, would be most useful and beneficial, and of the highest importance to the conservation of the forests of New Zealand.

Mr. RICHMOND would like to express his very strong opinion that the only hope of preserving the forests was by alienating them. He knew of one case in which a valuable forest was being wasted by those who were most interested in it—he referred to the forests of the Amuri district. There were only a few gentlemen in that district large proprietors, not wanting in business ability, able to look after their own interests, and yet the forest had been shamefully wasted. There was one practice which he remembered noticing—that timber was cut for the purpose of asserting a right to it, and it was left to rot on the ground. He was one of the