

benefit by conserving a valuable asset, our forest lands would last much longer, and advantages as regards climate and shelter would result. Experience further proves that in districts where timber lands adapted for settlement exist it would be wise at different intervals to set apart suitable reserves. By taking strict precautions against fire and trespass great good would arise from such reserves, not only to the present but to future generations. An examination of the forest laws and regulations of different countries in Europe and America, and also of the Colony of Victoria, shows how lax the law of New Zealand is in respect to its forests. Again, for years little has been done in the matter of tree-planting. This is to be regretted, and it is a great pity that the legislation and proposals on this subject of that far-seeing statesman, Sir Julius Vogel, should have been allowed to become a dead-letter, for with slight modification such legislation would have proved a great boon to the settlers and colonists generally to-day, and a great source of wealth in the future. Detailed proposals dealing with this matter will be submitted by the Minister of Lands, and provision will be made on the estimates to meet the necessary expenditure. A very interesting report upon the conservation of New Zealand forests, by Mr. George S. Perrin, F.L.S., F.R.G.S., F.R.H.S., Conservator of State Forests, Victoria, will be laid on the table of both Houses of the General Assembly. The report is practically the outcome of the Timber Conference held in Wellington on the 17th July, 1896, and following days.

BEET-ROOT SUGAR.

The advantages that would result from the successful growing of beet-root, and the manufacture of sugar therefrom, cannot be too highly estimated. Some years ago Sir Julius Vogel interested himself in this matter; but, although legislation followed, no practical good to the colony has resulted. Germany is making strenuous efforts by means of bonus, cheap railway-freights, &c., to foster the manufacture of beet-root sugar; and the cheerful way in which the German consumers of the Fatherland submit to the high prices charged for sugar for home consumption, and at the same time find the money for the payment of bonuses, clearly indicates that they appreciate the advantages to the nation as a whole resulting from the growing of sugar-beet. In the Western States of America the beet-root sugar industry is assuming large proportions. When in San Francisco I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Claus Spreckels and others interested in the industry. From them I obtained reliable information as to the benefits resulting to the Californian States from the growing of beet-root and the making of sugar from it. Localities which, prior to the starting of beet-growing, were in an impoverished condition and almost depopulated owing to the poor returns from the land are now in a most thriving condition. Land has gone up in value at least £1 per acre, the demand for labour is good, increased roading has been found necessary, and a railway specially for that part of the State is now in course of construction. Our neighbours in the Colony of Victoria have also passed legislation affecting the industry, and have offered inducements sufficient to warrant a company in erecting a factory at Maffra. For some years past experiments have been made in different parts of this colony with the view of testing the soil for sugar-beet growing, and the results have been very satisfactory. The lands in the Waikato, Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, and Taranaki districts in the North Island, and Marlborough, Canterbury, and the northern parts of Otago, are found to be specially suitable. The percentage of saccharine matter obtained from sugar-beet grown in those parts equals, if it does not exceed, that obtained in Germany and France. That our settlers could undertake to supply, at a satisfactory price, the amount of beet required is assured. The main difficulty in the way is the finding of the working capital necessary for the purchase and erection of machinery and plant. This is estimated at not less than a quarter of a million pounds sterling. In selecting a site for the works, it has been pointed out to me that three things are essential—viz., a plentiful supply of clean water, cheap motive-power, and a place into which the refuse from the works could be drained without risk of claims for damages from the holders of