

forward would arise a steady increasing revenue to the Government, which in less than fifteen years would reimburse the Government for all the outlay incurred during the preceding thirty years.

The planting I would suggest not to be continuous, but somewhat in the shape of a chess-board, one mile planted and one mile left free, and so on. There are other considerations upon which I have not touched, but which may strongly be urged in favour of carrying out the plan I suggest—one of these is, that the planting of deciduous trees will probably improve the unplanted portions of the plains to such an extent as to make them fit to carry grasses which grow on poor soils.

GERHARD MUELLER, Commissioner of Crown Lands.

ROTORUA.

Tree-planting.—As an experiment, on the Kaingaroa Plains three five-acre allotments, at Tura-kenga, and one nine-acre allotment have been cleared, ploughed, harrowed, fenced in, and planted with trees; and at Mamaku one five-acre allotment of standing bush has been fenced in, and lines have been cleared through the bush, and trees planted along them. A portion of the Rotorua Town Belt has also been set apart and prepared as above, and planted with trees. On these various allotments 12,600 trees have been planted, as follow: Ash, 3,600; larch, 4,200; spruce, 3,500; *Abies menziesii*, 100; chestnuts, 600; *Pinus austriaca*, 100; *Pinus rectinata*, 50; *Abies douglasii*, 50; red-gum, 100; blue-gum, 100; oak, 100; golden willow, 100. All the trees, with the exception of the gums and totaras, which were planted rather late, appear to be doing very well. I am told, however, by settlers who have made similar experiments that the trees thrive to a certain extent, but make no wood; this, however, remains to be proved.

Grass Paddocks.—Two allotments of one acre each have been cleared, ploughed, and fenced in different parts of the Kaingaroa Plains, on which it was intended to sow some Chewing's fescue and oats. The oats were sown, and a fairly good crop resulted; the fescue, however, arrived too late in the spring, but will be sown this autumn. The expenditure for the year for trees and grass has been £475 5s. 9d.

Lands and Survey Paddock at Rotorua.—An area of 17½ acres has been set off, cleared, and drained for this purpose, and will be fenced in shortly, all the material for which is on the ground.

R. H. REANEY, Road Surveyor.

OTAGO.

State Forests Branch.—In appending the report of Mr. Matthews, Forester, detailing the work that has been accomplished by him between 19th August, 1896, and 31st March, 1897, in connection with the establishment of the central state nursery in the Maniototo Plain, I am glad to be able to state that this has been carried out in a most satisfactory manner. In starting a nursery in that locality, as will be observed from Mr. Matthews's report, many climatic difficulties had to be surmounted, the past season having been one of the driest ever experienced in the district; but these have been successfully overcome, and there are at the present time approximately half a million of young well-rooted trees of species which have been carefully chosen both with regard to their suitability for the district and quality of timber. It will also be observed that an area of 75 acres intended for a forest reserve has been fenced with rabbit-proof netting, and is in course of cultivation for permanent planting, as is also an area of 25 acres. These areas have been leased meanwhile for cropping, so as to save expense in preparing the ground for the reception of the trees when they are ready for transplanting. Altogether, the necessary preparations for in due time planting timber trees in the Maniototo and surrounding interior districts are well forward, with every prospect of success in the future. Mr. Matthews has also carefully inspected and reported on the Tapanui district, with the view of establishing a nursery there, for which he has selected an excellent site, and also an area for planting, which he considers will be very suitable for the purpose, while of little or no value for settlement. The difficulties of soil and climate experienced in Maniototo will not occur in Tapanui, as the latter district will be found suitable generally for the growth of many valuable timber trees which can only be grown in special spots in the interior. I may state that Mr. Matthews, under arrangement with the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Invercargill, is preparing to grow in the Tapanui Nursery trees for Southland plantations. It will also be seen that Mr. Matthews has inspected land in the Southland District, both for a nursery and permanent plantation. I think Mr. Matthews is specially qualified for the position he holds, as he is enthusiastic in his work, and in every way capable of filling it in such a manner as will be a credit to both the Government and himself. His nursery at Maniototo is creating a great deal of interest in the district, and may be regarded as an excellent object-lesson for the settlers in that treeless locality, and which I trust will in time encourage many of them to look upon the planting of useful trees as an important part of their work in connection with the cultivation of their farms. As an indication that the nursery at Eweburn is attracting attention, I append a copy of a descriptive notice of the same which appeared in the *Mount Ida Chronicle* of the 6th February last.

J. P. MAITLAND, Commissioner of Crown Lands.

THE CENTRAL STATE NURSERY AT EWEBURN.

Immediately after receiving my appointment as Forester, on August 19th, 1896, I proceeded to Maniototo district to inspect various plantation reserves, with the view of selecting a site for the establishment of a central State nursery. Having reported thereon to head-quarters, I then received instructions to commence operations at Eweburn, and accordingly made arrangements