

1908.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS: STATE NURSERIES AND PLANTATIONS

(REPORT ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

SIR,—

Department of Lands, Wellington, 22nd June, 1908.

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Chief Forester on the State nurseries and plantations under his management for the financial year ended 31st March last, prefacing it with some general remarks on the subject of afforestation in New Zealand, and the lines on which the Forests Branch of this Department has been proceeding up to the present time.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM C. KENSINGTON,

The Hon. Robert McNab, Minister of Lands.

Under-Secretary for Lands.

GENERAL REMARKS.

IMPORTANCE OF SUBJECT.

From time to time various authorities have called the attention of the Government of the day to the growing need for systematic forest-conservation in New Zealand, notably the late Captain Campbell Walker and Professor Kirk, and in last year's report on "The Timber Industry of New Zealand" extracts were given from articles published abroad showing how the results of deforestation were detrimentally affecting almost every country in the world. In the report it was shown that the matter was becoming one of the gravest nature in many countries, and that the respective Governments were now alive to the evil effect of widespread denudation of hilly and sandy country, and were taking steps to remedy the present state of affairs. It is well known that in France and Germany schools of forestry have for many years been in active operation, and have done an immense amount of good by scientifically studying the methods of tree-cutting and timber-supply generally; and the Governments of the United States and India have also of late years energetically worked to the same end, the results of the Indian Forests Department being particularly noticeable and satisfactory. Although in this Dominion there is not the same pressing need for forest-conservation or afforestation to assist in increasing or producing an annual rainfall, as is so much the case in India and the United States, yet even in this favoured land it is essential to preserve and regulate the present supply and cause it to be distributed in an even and temperate manner; and the further objects of afforestation—viz., to prevent the denudation of hillsides and the preservation of arable soil in the higher regions of the country—are just as imperative in our own country as in the larger and more populated territories to which the articles refer. In considering any scheme for the profitable conservation and partial utilisation of our forest lands, therefore, it has always to be borne in mind that the obtaining of the largest possible quantity of sawn timber from any given area of forest is not the only consideration, but that with a limited supply of timber-trees it behoves us to insure that too rapid a cutting does not take place at the present time, and that a future supply is systematically provided.