

1909.
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, 18th May, 1909.

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the officer in charge of the State nurseries and plantations for the financial year ended 31st March last, prefacing it with an outline of the good work carried out under the direction of the late Chief Forester, Mr. H. J. Matthews, from 1896 up to the time of his death (27th April, 1909), and also indicating in a general manner the lines on which the Afforestation Branch of this Department is now proceeding.

The illustrations accompanying the report are for the purpose of showing the extremely slow growth of the principal native timber-trees as compared with some of the exotic trees grown at the State nurseries.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM C. KENSINGTON,
Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Right Hon. Sir Joseph G. Ward, P.C., K.C.M.G.,
Minister of Lands and Commissioner of State Forests.

THE following report, giving the reafforestation operations for the past year, is clothed with a melancholy interest, as shortly after the close of the financial year Mr. H. J. Matthews, the late Chief Forester, was stricken with a severe illness, to which he succumbed about the end of April. The late Mr. Matthews was carrying on his official duties to the very last. Early in April he arranged with myself to meet him at Rotorua during Easter, so that together we might discuss several important matters on the ground, relative to the planting operations with prison labour. On my arrival at Rotorua I received a letter from him saying he felt so unwell that he was obliged to leave for Auckland to obtain medical advice, and about a month later the news of his death came to hand. To the late Mr. Matthews belongs the whole credit of the direction of the reafforestation operations. Selected for the work by the late Sir John McKenzie in 1896, Mr. Matthews relinquished his own successful nursery business at Dunedin, and took over the charge of the reafforestation operations, throwing all his energy into the work, and bringing to bear upon it all his technical experience. The first State nursery started was at Eweburn, in Otago, followed by one at Tapanui, also in Otago. Then followed the Rotorua Nursery, after which came the Seddon Nursery, in the Marlborough district; Hanmer, in North Canterbury; and Ruatangata, near Whangarei, in the Auckland district. From these nurseries the trees required for the grand plantations at Dusky Hill and Conical Hills, in Otago; Hanmer, in North Canterbury; Waiotapu and Waipa, in the Thermal Springs district; and Puhupuhi, near Whangarei, were obtained. The late Chief Forester was a whole-hearted supporter of the system of employing prison labour, and personally supervised the erection of each prison camp, going minutely into every detail to insure success. I have been most closely associated with him since 1902, and have always found him very enthusiastic and painstaking, sparing no personal trouble in carrying out all details. Some two years ago, at the request of the Commissioner of State Forests, he wrote a well-arranged book upon tree-planting in New Zealand, which was published by the Government Printer, and which work came in for universal praise. Last, but not least, of the fruits of Mr. Matthews's labours has been the training of experienced nurserymen and assistants, who are now able to carry on the work, without a break, so ably directed by the late Chief Forester. The sympathy