

Certain parts of New Zealand are treeless, or nearly so, especially Central Otago and the Mackenzie Plains. It would be of the greatest advantage to the State if such were afforested. The former district, owing to constant burning of the tussock and overstocking, including the ravages of rabbits, is virtually a desert below a certain altitude. Tree-planting here would be of the greatest benefit, and, even if carried on at a slight loss, the benefits would be great enough to sanction its adoption.

We are asked in what localities new nurseries and plantations should be established.

1. *As to Nurseries.*

Dealing first with the nurseries of the North Island, we are of opinion that the one at Whakarewarewa is quite adequate, so far as position goes, but that it will soon be too small. Since the pumice lands of the Hot Lakes District are so admirably adapted for afforestation, a large nursery in their vicinity will be required for many years. We recommend, then, that such suitable land as adjoins the nursery should be secured and reserved for nursery purposes, even if at present it be larger than required. So far as the price of the land goes, it must be emphasized that it is false economy to form a nursery for trees upon poor soil. The soil of the nursery should always be better than that of the plantations. Should our recommendations be given effect to, that there should be tree-planting on the dunes of western Wellington, then, as such planting would at first be experimental merely, the trees necessary could quite well be raised at Rotorua. If the gum-lands of the far North are to be afforested, then it might be necessary to have a second nursery in their vicinity; but the question is entirely one of relative cost of conveying the trees from Rotorua as against growing them on the spot, plus the additional expense of forming a new nursery with its necessary buildings.

There are at present three nurseries in the South Island—namely, those of Tapanui, Ranfurly, and Hanmer. It is evident that the expenses would be greatly reduced if there were one central nursery rather than these three. The South Island, too, is well supplied with railways, and it would be an easy matter to transport the young trees to almost any place suitable for afforestation operations. Tapanui, the most important of the present nurseries, possesses a soil difficult to work and by no means suitable for tree-raising; indeed, it speaks volumes for the skill in nursery-work of the Superintending Nurseryman, Mr. R. G. Robinson, that such good results are attained under such adverse conditions. As for Hanmer and Ranfurly, neither is specially suited for the work.

We recommend, then, that a central nursery be established for the South Island in South Canterbury, in the neighbourhood of Studholme Junction. The soil and climate are both ideal for the raising of nursery stock. The only drawback is the high price of land in that neighbourhood. But, as already explained, good soil is essential for the best nursery results, and it is quite legitimate in forestry operations to select the best of land for a nursery. The reasons for our selecting the above locality, and recommending a central nursery, are as follows: (1.) The good condition of soil and climate would enable nursery stock of a better quality to be raised, and the young trees would be suitable for transplanting at an earlier age. (2.) The position close to the Main Trunk line would facilitate delivery of stock to almost any part of the South Island suitable for afforestation. (3.) The expenses of one central nursery would be much less than that of a number of smaller nurseries far distant from one another. (4.) As we propose that the private planter and public bodies be supplied with trees at cost-price the nursery situated where suggested would be in a most convenient position to meet the demand. (5.) The proposed plantations on the Mackenzie Plains could be readily supplied.

2. *As to Plantations.*

During our travels through the Dominion we have paid special attention to the examination of areas not yet set aside which might be suitable for future afforestation. We recommend the following:—