

bring the trustees of the people's money under the influence or scope of the Industries Committee, so that they could induce, persuade, or compel them to take some practical action, even on a small scale—as, for example, the establishing of a Scientific Research Library and Reading-room, and establishing an experimental and chemical laboratory, so that those thousand students could have free access for experimenting. If the brain-power of those thousand students was brought into action no mind can conceive the revolution it would produce in the science and industries of the country. Therefore, if this evidence appeals to you, I would most respectfully ask your favourable assistance in inducing the Government to take such steps as would speedily develop the valuable mineral resources of the district, which would materially benefit the entire Dominion.

F. G. GIBBS examined.

I have been asked by the Nelson Forestry Society to urge upon you that a forestry expert should be appointed to investigate the question of transforming our birch or beech forests into good timber forests. The Year-book shows that Nelson Provincial District has a very much larger proportion of rough mountainous country covered with birch than any other provincial district. When Mr. Hutchins, forestry expert, was lecturing here we discussed the question with him. It appears to us who know our forests that a considerable area is likely to remain unproductive and uninhabited. In such rough country birch is not worth putting in mills for timber purposes, and when the birch is destroyed all the rest of the bush disappears. The question is, Is it not possible to turn the birch forest into good timber-milling forest? It is suggested that a certain amount of experimental planting might be carried out with different species of timber-trees planted in the birch forest. The present forest would afford admirable cover and shelter, and in time the forests might be transformed into valuable timber forests. At present there seems no possibility of utilizing that large area of forest country. Mr. Hutchins suggested that if the Government appointed an expert he might plant certain experimental areas—might plant certain kinds of trees which might in time turn this country into a valuable asset to the Dominion.

*To Mr. Sidey:* The area is Government land. On the fringe of the forests a certain amount of destruction is going on by fires; but in the back country the amount of destruction is quite on a small scale—the large mass of the forests is untouched. Millers tell me that although birch is being sold at a high price at the present time on account of the shortness of wood, still they do not get the same return per acre from birch as they would per acre from, say, pine. Light railways would be useful in this connection.

*To Mr. Craigie:* Much of the land where birch is growing would not be good for agricultural purposes when cleared. Our suggestion is to plant other suitable trees amongst the birch-trees, and that is Mr. Hutchins's suggestion.

*To Mr. Forbes:* The trees Mr. Hutchins suggested were chiefly trees from abroad—not New Zealand trees. I have also been asked by the Chamber of Commerce to bring under your notice the desirableness of the Government putting some bores down on the Waimea Plains and the level country about Takaka and Collingwood with the view of prospecting for coal-seams. Vertical seams have been discovered, but the opinion of the experts seems to be that the vertical seams will turn to horizontal as they go down. A suggestion has been made as to an amount from the Cawthron bequest that might be expended in scientific research. I would suggest that if a very much larger sum than that stated were devoted to this purpose there would be ample scope for scientific research. I desire briefly to support Mr. Washbourn's statement in connection with Parapara.

*To Mr. Veitch:* The geological report on the Dun Mountain district gives much information in regard to the coal-seams.

H. R. DUNCAN, Chairman, Nelson Harbour Board, examined.

The original scheme for Nelson Harbour, formulated in 1900, when the Board was formed, was to have a cut through the Boulder Bank of 500 ft. The work was put in hand. The estimated cost was £58,000, and it was found that the whole work could not be carried out. £65,000 has been expended. 500 ft. was the original width of the cut; it is now only 350 ft. We have expended practically £72,771 on the harbour. The policy of the Board is to get the original scheme completed. We have £35,000 to expend out of the old loan; but the ratepayers have not agreed to be rated for that amount—that is, the ratepayers have not authorized the additional amount being raised—they turned it down at a poll. The present position is that we have carried out a certain amount of dredging to improve the depth of water in the cut, inside and outside; and we have got a depth in the cut of 13½ ft. or 14 ft. We want at least 15 ft. or 16 ft.—that is, at low water. We can bring in boats at high water drawing 24 ft. The rise and fall of the tide is 12½ ft. We have brought in a boat drawing 23 ft. or 24 ft. and between 470 ft. and 500 ft. in length. We want to be able to bring in boats drawing up to 26 ft. At the present time we have had considerable silting at the wharf. The Government jurisdiction extends 70 ft. beyond the wharf. We have made application for the last eighteen months, and although the Government promised to have the dredging done it has not yet been done. The Government are responsible for dredging 70 ft. from the wharf. I believe the Railway Department has used their best endeavours, but has been unable to get a dredge at what they consider a reasonable figure. I desire to say that I am one of the Cawthron trustees. I have listened to some criticism as to the alleged delay of action on the part of the trustees. I may say that the trustees have acted on the strong advice of an Advisory Board of scientists. It was on their advice that we should do nothing while the war is on in the way of appointing a Director. We have invited