

WHAT OF THE FUTURE

INSURANCE POLICY IN TREE-GROWING

(By E. T. Frost.)

WITH the advent of long summer days and dryness, the air is tinged with smoke that indicates destruction of vegetative covering in various localities in North Auckland.

Last summer was disastrous. The whole subject of fire and soil protection should be immediately tackled, or the future will be a very precarious one for the rising generation.

The position is going to be brought home to us in a much more aggravated form when the present world conflict is over and the problem of repatriating and settling our soldiers confronts us. Are they to be brought back and put on to land that has lost its virgin fertility in the hope that they can earn a reasonably comfortable living?

In a great number of cases they would find that they had only been transferred from one sphere of warlike activities to another, and might well have less chance of emerging victorious in the second phase than in the first.

What will the authorities do about it? World conditions will be upset and markets restricted, even for those who may be able to produce various primary products.

There is one alternative which will cope with the situation and at the same time go a long way towards winning the second phase of the war. We can find employment that will be profitable for both the individual and the nation. A long-range afforestation scheme, both

public and private, should be planned in readiness for action immediately after the war.

This, together with conservation of the remnant of forests where possible, should provide work for thousands of men over a period of years, probably the most critical period. The benefits could not be measured in terms of money. The climatic benefits, flood control, soil conservation, increase of native birds, and the general improvement in the appearance of the countryside will be some of the immediate gains.

On the material side, it is safe to say that inside half a century the Dominion would become a large exporter of wood products. To-day the scientist has enabled us to obtain innumerable by-products from wood, and there is no reason to prevent us from exploiting these.

We have reached a low level in regard to forest protection and reproduction, and it is time there was a turn for the better. We, as a people, can assist that movement in forest regeneration that will enable our younger generation to face confidently the problems of the future. We can find money for war; surely we can find it for such a scheme as will repay it with interest and at the same time assist in the repatriation of our soldiers. Here is a chance for our politicians to achieve something that will be a lasting memorial to themselves and a boon to the coming generations.

ORIGINAL NEW ZEALAND.

