

# PROGRESS

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**THE SCIENTIFIC NEW ZEALANDER.**

VOL. II.—No. 7. MONTHLY.]

WELLINGTON, N.Z., MAY 1, 1907.

[PRICE: 6d Per Copy; 6/6 Per Annum posted,  
or in advance 5/-]

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**The Scientific New Zealand.**

Published Monthly by Baldwin & Rayward, Patent  
Attorneys, 71 Lambton Quay, Wellington, N.Z.

PROGRESS will be mailed regularly every month to any  
address in the colony on prepayment of the Annual  
Subscription—6/6 per annum posted, or in  
advance, 5/- To Australia or United Kingdom,  
5/6 in advance.

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All communications to be addressed: "The Editor,  
PROGRESS, Progress Buildings, Cuba street, Wellington."  
Telephone 2234.

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paper's delivery, subscribers should send immediate  
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## EDITORIAL COMMENT.

### The Timber Supply of New Zealand.

This was written by the Washington correspondent of a British newspaper syndicate in February, 1907:—

Nothing in this country is growing by leaps and bounds like the timber properties. The pinch is coming. The prodigal waste of years is creating a paucity of desirable timber tracts. A piece of land in W. Virginia, covered with spruce and hemlock, and purchased five years ago for 12,000 dols., was recently sold for 500,000 dols. Think—£2400 turned into £100,000 in five years! And without an hour's labour or a shilling expenditure. And the fool Governments of Australia are following the same course. Timber is cut down and rushed away by the square mile without the slightest attempt at re-forestation being made. Australia is living on its forest capital just as it has done on its land asset.

In 1875 Captain Campbell Walker, of the Indian and New Zealand Forestry Departments, had written:—

It is incumbent on the Government to take early steps to secure adequate reserves for future supply and climatic considerations, reduce waste to a minimum, and secure a proper share of public revenue from the valuable wooded area remaining in its hands, a portion to be devoted to replanting hillsides and plains destitute of timber. By this means we shall virtually transfer the wealth of timber, from places where it is superfluous to where it is most required, and benefit both localities, both directly and indirectly, by doing so. No forest is inexhaustible unless systematically worked on principles which insure the capital not being treasured upon, and the income alone utilised.

Our sketch (to-day) of the timber industry of New Zealand shows, on the best official authority, that the forests must be exhausted in seventy years. The area of annual denudation is 40,000 acres, while that of re-

planting is 1,400. The surveyor-general, Mr. Marchant, in his report of 1904, wrote:—

It will be admitted that this colony should never be allowed to drift into the position of having to look for its supplies of timber to other countries, which, at the best, are very distant, and in all probability will have in the interests of their own inhabitants to prohibit the extensive exportation of timber. I have therefore to recommend that the operations of the Forestry Branch of this Department in tree-planting be conducted on a scale at least equivalent to the estimated requirements.

The position is pathetic in one respect: we had ample warning thirty years ago of what was coming, and we took strong measures then to cope with the requirements of the position. One of the most brilliant ideas of the late Sir Julius Vogel—who had so many brilliant ideas the fruit of his very able far seeing intelligence—was the creation of a Department of Forestry, and the appointment of Captain Campbell Walker at its head, who was selected from the Indian Forestry Department which had then reduced forestry to a fine art, controlled by a set of splendid officers, of whom the Captain was one of the ablest. He served a year or so, and was succeeded by the late Professor Kirk the eminent authority, whose writings on the subject of the flora and the forestation of the country are standards to this day. But the cheese-paring policy of the early eighties, for which Parliament was collectively responsible, put an end to the good work, and, for a time, waste and neglect worked their will in the forests of the land. After a few years the seriousness of the position was once more realised by the Government, and the forest laws were enacted of which a brief sketch will be found in an article published elsewhere to-day. A Forest Department was created within the Lands Department and Mr. Matthews was appointed Chief Forester. He has done some excellent work, as we propose to show in a future article.

The double necessity, economic and climatic, for immediate re-forestation has been proved with startling emphasis. It has also been proved that enlightened forestry is most profitable, directly and indirectly, to the State. Political authority, moreover, is in its favour.

The country has not forgotten the emphatic pronouncement of the late Mr. Seddon on the need for nursing the forests that remain, and the planting of the forests of the future. In addition we have in

the present Minister of Lands a man devoted to the cause of enlightened and vigorous forestry. The time is more than ripe, and the circumstances are most favourable for a forward policy in the right direction of substantial, that is to say of colossal proportions, on the basis of the established system. It remains for the people and the Legislature to see that such a policy is inaugurated.

### High Speed and Economy.

NEW ZEALAND may be reckoned amongst the countries of the world which have experienced the remarkable feats of motor-cars, not specially built to withstand the extraordinary wear and tear of running on cattle tracks. True, the roads between Wellington and Napier are in many parts excellent—grade and surface being easily conducive to speed—but in the main they are as unfit for fair going as it is possible to conceive. In the ordinary course, we find grade upon grade of 1 in 15 down to 1 in 4; the decking of bridges some four or five inches above the road level, an almost total absence of direction signs, and a great lack of courtesy on the part of traffic impeters. Still, in the face of these deterrents, it is possible to achieve some excellent results with a good car in capable hands.

The "Gladiator" may be fairly termed an aristocrat amongst motor cars. Small wonder then that under the charge of Mr. J. Wilkinson, who commenced his tour of the world with New Zealand, a 4-cylinder 18-28 h.p. machine of this make should complete the distance between Wellington and Napier, which, with unavoidable deviations amounted on this occasion to 240 miles, in 10 hrs. 20 min. The running was also of great interest from the point of view of fuel economy. With a tank containing a mixture of benzine and petrol, the entire journey was completed on 10 gallons, or at an average of 24 miles to the gallon. No stop was made to rectify a tyre trouble—French Dunlops are famous for their reliability—nor was there occasion to use a spanner or tool on any part of the engine. The best times on the flat were accomplished easily at a consistent 40 miles per hour. The return journey was made without a stop in nine hours, and Mr. Wilkinson, from the experience gained, stated he saw a possibility of doing it in eight.

Mr. Wilkinson proceeds from here to Australia, thence to China, Japan, India and Europe.