

PART II.

VICTORIA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, CEYLON.

VICTORIA.

Victoria.

SIR,— The Hon. J. G. FRANCIS to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.
Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, Victoria, 24th March, 1874.

In compliance with your request of the 17th ultimo, to be supplied, for the information of your Government, with copies of the Acts of the Parliament of Victoria, reports, and other published papers, relating to the question of dealing with the forests of this Colony, I have much pleasure in forwarding to you six copies of the Land Act of Victoria, 1869, and of the regulations issued under that Act; six copies of the report of a Board appointed by the Governor in Council, in August, 1867, to inquire into and report upon the best means of securing the permanency of the State forests; and three copies of the first annual report issued by the Department of Agriculture, 1873.

The volume last mentioned will be found to contain two brief reports, dated respectively 1st June, 1873, and 23rd August, 1873, by the Inspector of State Forests.

I regret that I am unable to send you copies of a report on the State forests recently made by Mr. W. G. Ivey to the Minister of Lands, as it is not yet in print, but I enclose a digest of that report, which was published in the *Argus* newspaper of the 28th ultimo.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary of New Zealand,
Wellington. J. G. FRANCIS.

EXTRACTS FROM ABRIDGED REPORT by Mr. W. G. IVEY.

Dandenong Forest.

THE successful efforts of nature to renew the expended timber are very apparent where fire has made a clean sweep of the vegetation existing at the time of its advent. In all these places the young trees exist even too thickly, but though upon the parts of the forest destroyed by the great fires of 1851 there are fine shapely young trees, 80 feet to 100 feet in height, they do not promise any immediate or early supply of timber. Differing from those spots where the old trees were destroyed by fire are those from which timber has been removed by man. Here, as a rule, no number of young trees spring up to take the place of those felled. It seems necessary that a complete clearing of all vegetation by fire should take place before nature puts forth her efforts to re-clothe the soil with timber trees. The question, therefore, arises, whether nature should not be aided by clearing by fire such spots, and also perhaps by sowing upon the surface seed of such species of eucalypti as would seem best suited to the soil and position of any particular spot.

Bullarook Forest.

The cutting of timber is in full play by the four classes, namely, saw-millers, splitters, prop cutters, &c., and firewood cutters. Saw-millers should be compelled to clear the land as they go of all useful timber, and to cut only on such blocks as they would be able to clear yearly. The post-and-rail splitter only needs mention as being equally guilty with the saw-miller in neglecting the regulation as to stacking of tree tops, which regulation seems to be impracticable and not to be enforced, and might with advantage require only heaping and burning at certain stated periods. Firewood cutters frequent only the eastern end of the forest. They should be restricted to certain areas, prohibited from entering upon lands growing young trees, and from cutting immature timber. There could be large areas of stunted timber set aside for firewood altogether, where the soil has not produced, and is not likely to produce, trees of value for other purposes. It is to be regretted that the immense amount of top and lop lying throughout the forest cannot be utilized for firewood. The great bulk is, however, too far from market at present, and must waste unless some systematic attempt were made, by the laying of tramways, to bring it into connection with the main lines of railway. Prop cutters do great damage, and where such is shown, their operations should be stopped at once. To procure an 8 inches prop they often fall a tree 18 inches to 20 inches in diameter, and taking off what they want, leave the butt to waste. Split props are coming into use, but still round ones are necessary in heavy country in alluvial mines, and it would probably be advisable to alter the regulation as to measurement