

1874.
NEW ZEALAND.

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

THE expenditure during the past year has been confined (1) to raising and distributing young forest trees, (2) to widening and extending the paths and the general improvement of the grounds, and (3) for planting.

1. The nursery ground has been thoroughly cleaned and trenched, and is now ready to receive the seedlings of this year's crop. A share of a large consignment of seeds, obtained by Government from California, has been received, and others are shortly expected from Europe, Eastern America, and India.

The late severe weather has prevented the raising of the seeds at so early a date as in previous years, so that a year will elapse before there will be a fresh supply of young plants for distribution.

The following is a statement of the total number of coniferous trees that have been successfully reared, and the mode of distribution, excluding from consideration all other trees and shrubs:—

Planted out in the Gardens	...	...	...	...	...	4,408
Distributed to Public Reserves	...	...	...	...	...	3,980
Sold	...	...	...	...	...	1,780
In Stock	...	...	...	...	...	3,586
						13,754

The loss of seedlings before planting out, and destruction from drought, insects, and other causes, has been about 30 per cent.

2. *Improvement of Grounds.*—The wide road from the entrance has been extended for 30 chains, and has been thoroughly trenched and planted on both sides as a shrubbery. The creeks have been cleaned out and several new bridges erected. The narrow paths have been cleaned, repaired, and gravelled where necessary. The gorse in the upper part of the grounds, which has always been a source of danger from fire, has been grubbed and burnt, and all the heavy bush has been underbrushed. All the work has been done by contract, when practicable.

3. Trees to the number of 1,880 have been planted during the year, and except that part of the ground covered with scrub or bush, the whole of the Domain within the fence has been planted. The total area now planted with forest trees and shrubs is about 20 acres, the total number of plants put out being over 6,000. Of this area 11 acres has been closely planted with conifers varying in age from three to five years from the seed. Nearly all the most valuable species have been planted, the total number being 4,500, or about 400 trees to the acre. This will allow of the thinning out, from time to time, of the less flourishing trees; but for many species, such as the more rapid growing pines, adapted for shelter, it is probably not a heavier crop than the ground can fairly carry.

About 10 per cent. of the trees originally planted out have required to be replaced, which indicates the amount of loss sustained.

The following is an abstract of the expenditure upon the Domain since its establishment in 1869:—

	£	s.	d.
Fencing	155	13	8
Paths and Bridges	168	1	4
Buildings, Seats, &c.	136	7	0
Nursery Ground—Water Supply, Frames, &c.	155	13	8
Purchase of Trees	151	17	11
Wages and Labour for Trenching and Planting	876	19	4
£1,644 12 11			

Selecting the items that may be fairly charged against the planting of the above area of 11 acres with forest trees, including the raising of the plants from seed and their maintenance since planting out, the amount is £650, or at the rate of £60 per acre, or about 3s. for each tree. In applying this experience to other plantations, however, the expense of fencing requires to be added.

The arrangement with the Provincial Government, under the Wellington Reserve Act, has been concluded, and the portion of the reserve shown on the attached plan has been conveyed to the Board,