

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOTANIC GARDEN
BOARD, 1876-77.

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

DURING the past year meetings of the Board were held on the 19th September, 19th October, 19th December, 1876, and on 17th May, and 9th July, 1877.

The only new work undertaken in the gardens has been the subdivision of the domain by brush fences, at a cost of £17 14s. 2d., with the view of introducing a few sheep to feed down the rough herbage, and form a smooth sward in places where the scythe cannot be used.

The chief expenditure for labour has been in repairing the paths and removing several landslips which occurred owing to the sudden rain of February last, coming after an unusually long period of draught.

The selection and packing of plants for distribution, and especially the preparation of twenty-four Wardian cases, which were despatched to Kew in January last, involved a large amount of extra labour.

The nursery-ground has been put in thorough order by trenching and draining, and a fresh set of seedling beds prepared for raising the large consignment of Californian seeds obtained by Government. One-half of this seed was sown in March last with indifferent success, owing to the unusual severity of the winter, but the rest of the seed, which is now about to be sown, will, it is hoped, afford a large supply of young trees for future distribution.

The chief planting within the gardens during the past season has been to replace trees which were lost through various causes.

The number of trees distributed by gift was 2,574, and to applicants 500 plants have been sold.

Ten years have now elapsed since the formation of the Botanic Garden was commenced by the Colonial Government, and eight years since it was placed under the management of the present Board.

As last year the usual vote was disallowed by the Legislature, and the gardens may probably in future have to depend on other sources of revenue, a recapitulation of the work done and the expense incurred since the establishment of the domain may not be out of place.

The area at first was in September, 1869, 13 acres; to this was added in October, 1869, 46 acres; in 1872, 21 acres; and in 1874, 10 acres.

The total area of the gardens now fenced in is 90 acres, as shown on the accompanying plan. Within this area there are 244 chains of paths, and 50 permanent seats.

Two separate systems of water supply have been applied for the use of the nursery-grounds; 9,557 trees have been planted out. Experimental culture of phormium and other plants has been successfully conducted by direction of Committees of the Legislature.

Nursery-grounds have been formed, in which 22,231 *Coniferae* and other trees have been raised from seed, and 7,048 distributed on application throughout the colony. Repayments on account of these, amount to £85 14s. 6d.

24,132 young trees have been received from Government correspondents on account of the Forest Department, and have been reared at the expense of the Board. The cases that these plants arrived in have been filled with native plants and returned as exchanges, the expense of which has also been defrayed by the Board.