

I am inclined further to advocate that an increased price, to be settled according to the circumstances of each district, but in no case less than 10s. per acre, be charged for all forest or bush land (of course I do not include mere scrub). This proposal is likely, I am well aware, to be met by the assertion that open land is often, if not generally, more valuable than that covered with bush; that it costs much money to clear the latter, and that, therefore, to ask a higher price for it would be absurd and unreasonable. My reply would be that we do not want people to take up bush land unless they can afford to clear it, and can dispose of the timber and forest produce to advantage; that, if the forest is not worth paying for now, it will be some day, and that, in fact, we prefer to wait, in the case of forest land, until it has an appreciable value, and the State be enabled to secure the direct advantage of the increased price of its land, and the utilizing of the timber from it, instead of its being wasted and destroyed as now.

The colony cannot, I maintain, afford any longer to give away its waste lands at a mere nominal value, still less to have their natural products squandered and destroyed by individuals without any adequate contribution to the State or colonial revenue. If we are to have a self-supporting Forest Department we must obtain revenue from the indigenous forests, to meet the cost of supervision, selection, and eventual development and improvement of the reserved forest area, formation of plantations, &c. And this can be done by (a.) sale of State forests not required as reserves; (b.) lease of State forests to saw-millers, on payment of tithe, or an annual rent per acre; (c.) license fees and royalties from splitters, firewood gatherers, and all parties taking timber from any of the Government forests; (d.) the leasing of Crown lands, more or less covered with forest, for the depasturing of cattle or sheep—a plan which has been adopted in South Australia with, I am informed, the best results.

7. A very considerable revenue can, I am confident, be realized from these sources without any undue curtailment of legitimate advantages enjoyed by New Zealand colonists. I would make no exceptions to the rule that parties making use of Government forest in any way should pay for the privilege, but I would make such payments very light, so as neither to interfere injuriously with the timber trade or industry, nor press heavily on the holders of pastoral leases, farmers, and others. It would occupy too much space, and serve no good purpose, to enter into further detail of the measures proposed. I have but endeavoured to give their broad outlines. They may be summarized as follows:—

1. The formation of a State Forest Department, consisting of a permanent staff of officers, whose special duty shall be the care of the colonial forests, the selection and subsequent valuation, improvement, and working of State forest reserves, to be set apart for climatic considerations and the permanent supply of timber for the future (supplemented by artificial plantations where required).
2. The introduction of a special Act, giving the Governor power to appoint such officers, constitute the reserves, and promulgate regulations for the better management and control of all forests, being Crown property.
3. The selection, demarcation, and survey of the said reserves and their systematic management and improvement by the departmental officers.
4. The gradual disposal of the remaining forest area, or of the timber and other forest products which it produces, to the best advantage.
5. The formation of Government plantations as circumstances demand and funds admit. This subject is dealt with in the portion of Chapter II. devoted to the consideration of existing plantations.
6. The encouragement of planting by private individuals, also dealt with in Chapter II.

8. To initiate these measures and gradually enforce the regulations, I propose, for the present, the following permanent staff:—

- 1 Conservator of State Forests.
- 2 Assistant Conservators.
- 10 Forest Rangers.
- 4 Clerks in the office of the Conservator and Assistant Conservators.

The following tabular statement shows the rates of pay and allowances proposed, and the probable total cost per annum of such a staff:—

Statement showing the proposed Rates of Pay and Allowances of the Permanent Staff of the State Forest Department, N.Z.

No. and Designation.	Annual Salary.	Fixed Allowance.	Travelling Allowances calculated for six months at 3s. 6d. per £100.
1 Conservator of State Forests ...	£1,000	...	£315
2 Assistant Conservators at £400 each ...	800	...	270
2 Forest Rangers at £250 each ...	500	£50	} 675
3 Forest Rangers at £200 each ...	600	75	
5 Forest Rangers at £175 each ...	875	125	
2 Clerks in Conservator's Office at £200 and £150 ...	350		
2 Clerks in Assistant Conservators' Office at £150 each ...	300		
Totals ...	£4,425	£250	£1,260