

1881.
NEW ZEALAND.

FORESTS IN NEW ZEALAND

(PAPERS RELATING TO COLONIAL REVENUES DERIVABLE FROM).

[In continuation of H.-3, 1880.]

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

SUGGESTIONS ON COLONIAL REVENUES DERIVABLE FROM NEW ZEALAND FORESTS.

TOTAL AREA OF THE CROWN AND PRIVATE FORESTS OF THE COLONY.

THE total area of land at present covered by forest in the whole colony is estimated by Dr. Hector at about 20,000,000 acres ("New Zealand Handbook" of 1879, p. 10). The Crown Lands Department states the total area of Crown forests in the colony to be about 10,000,000 acres (Annual Report, 1879); and a further statement from the same department shows the total acreage of alienations of Crown lands, from the foundation of the colony to March, 1880, to have been 14,126,772 acres. In the following estimates, judging *a priori*, the present total area of the private forests in the colony (exclusive of Maori property) is taken at 5,000,000 acres.

YIELD OF NEW ZEALAND FORESTS TO THE ACRE.

There is not, as yet, any official information on this point; but the opinion expressed by saw-millers is to the effect that the average yield of New Zealand forests does not exceed 15,000 feet to the acre. However, observations made by Captain Campbell-Walker and Mr. Kirk in Southland forests proved the yield there to be above 30,000 feet to the acre; but in these estimates was included wood which might not have been suitable for the saw-mill. Although the determining of an approximately accurate average yield on 20,000,000 acres of forest may at present be termed an impossibility, still a quantity of valuable wood equal to the cubic volume represented by 15,000 superficial feet may be safely admitted as a moderate average yield to the acre.

EXTENT OF THE PRESENT DEMAND, MARKET VALUE, ETC.

The conversion of timber at saw-mills in this country of wooden houses, although already and comparatively very considerable, is still constantly increasing. By information afforded in the above-quoted "New Zealand Handbook," we know that the number of saw-mills in the colony was 204 in 1879. The average yearly supply from each of these mills may be approximately estimated at 1,000,000 superficial feet, or say about 200,000,000 superficial feet as the total of the present annual product. (In 1876 the out-turn of twenty-five saw-mills in the Auckland District was officially reported to be 46,000,000 superficial feet yearly.) The quantity of timber yearly cut down for purposes other than those of the saw-mill is enormous, and could not be estimated at less than the cubic volume of the sawn timber. Thus the sawn and round timber annually supplied out of the forests of the colony would together represent a cubic volume equal to 400,000,000 superficial feet of timber.

The average market value of sawn timber at Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, and Invercargill is about 13s. per 100 superficial feet.

In Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and other cities, firewood is already as dear as, if not dearer than, in any capital of Europe.

Now, by taking the average market value of timber, sawn and round, as 10s. for a quantity equal in volume to 100 superficial feet, the total market value of the timber yearly supplied out of these forests would be £2,000,000.