

there would be less demand for the timber in the colony and for export, and, consequently, less inducement to bring it to market. The rise in price, to operate beneficially, must proceed from the greater demand for the article. With the view of inducing this, the department has been in correspondence with firms largely engaged in the trade, and proposals have been made towards opening a trade with Europe in the timbers of the colony. Mr. Le Coy, who has given much attention to the subject, is of opinion that if Government would aid the trade by getting the New Zealand timbers officially tested and exhibited at Paris, an important trade could be opened up with France, as timber is scarce there, and several of the New Zealand varieties would be likely to take. The matter is worthy a trial; and, since the trade is willing to venture on the enterprise of timber export, the Government ought to give every facility through official introductions to start it in the manner indicated.

In any regulations bearing on the subject of forest conservancy it would be essential to bear in mind the importance of preserving the young trees, and only allowing those to be cut down which have matured. When the subject is taken up, it will also be important to plant English trees in the forests. Mr. McArthur, the Inspector of Forests in Southland, is strongly of opinion that this should be taken in hand at once. He looks upon the forest areas which have been cut over as most valuable nurseries, where, amid the natural shelter of the indigenous shrubbery and trees, he would plant the larch, and in twenty years, or probably less in New Zealand, the trees would have grown to a serviceable size for railway sleepers, and the numerous other uses to which larch can be applied. Unfortunately the larch in Dunedin has been attacked by a grub, which tops it, and so stunts the growth, but the same evil does not seem to exist in Invercargill, as Mr. McArthur has grown larch very successfully.

PLANTATIONS.

Closely allied to the question of forest conservation is that of rearing forests in those districts of the colony where there is no growing timber. Although there are 10,000,000 acres of Crown lands under forest, besides what is owned privately, yet, as it generally occurs in very large blocks of unbroken forest, there are in the most populous districts of the colony—Canterbury and Otago—many localities without a single indigenous tree. This, as regards the supply of timber for local wants, is not so very serious a matter to some districts as it was before the extension of the railway system; but, for future supply of timber, for shelter, the beauty of the country, and beneficial climatic influence, it is very important that plantations should be fostered. This has been recognized in the Forest Trees Planting Encouragement Acts of 1871 and 1872, which entitle any person to a land order of £4 for every acre successfully planted in terms of regulations. These Acts were only in force in Nelson, Canterbury, and Otago, up to 1877, when the regulations were made applicable to the entire colony. (See *Gazette* for 1877, folio 132.) Within the last year, land orders have been issued to three proprietors in Canterbury, representing 167 acres planted, and two land orders to proprietors in Otago, representing 120 acres planted. Altogether, under these Acts and their regulations, there have been issued since they came into force 18 land orders, representing 1,040 acres planted; of which 13 were to proprietors in Canterbury, for 764 acres planted, and 5 in Otago, for 276 acres planted. Up to 1879, the land orders were only issued in encouragement of private enterprise; but in that year an amending Act extended the encouragement to public bodies as well. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to allow of any public body fulfilling the conditions under which land orders are issued; but the counties of Lake and Ashburton have both entered upon planting within their respective borders.

The Planting Board of Canterbury, which began operations about two years ago, has got 532 acres enclosed and planted in selected blocks of about 50 acres each, along and in the vicinity of the railway lines. The Board has 18,493½ acres of planting reserves in hand, and the rents from one portion give the means of enclosing and planting the other; and, after a time, the revenue from the thinnings of the plantation will supply funds to continue the planting, until the whole area has been brought under tree cultivation.

In the interior of Otago there is a region one hundred miles in diameter where there is not a single native tree growing, the whole country being one enormous grass field. The time has been when there were extensive forests on the ranges, as shown by the remains of trees still lying on the surface, and the trunks found in the mosses and lignite beds. In the disposal of this extensive area, within the next year or two, there will be a considerable accession of settlers, who, each for his own place, will plant a few trees; but something more extensive is required, and, with the object of providing sites for future planting operations, it is proposed to reserve considerable areas for that purpose.

MULBERRY TREES.—SILK CULTURE.

The labours of the Industrial Commission of 1880, and the Local Industrial Exhibitions which have been held since, have awakened and widened the interest felt in developing the special aptitudes of the colony in respect of natural productions. Mr. Federli, who, from practical knowledge of silk culture acquired in his native country, Italy, and from observation of the climate of New Zealand, is convinced that all that is wanted to make it a great success here is to get people to grow the mulberry, and take the trouble of feeding the silkworm for the six weeks or two months of its short period of activity. The Industrial Association in Christchurch, and