

RODNEY AND BAY OF ISLANDS COUNTIES.

It is intended to make a special examination of certain reserves in these counties with the view of arranging for the replacement of a large amount of useless scrub with puriri, the most valuable timber in the colony for railway sleepers, the beds of railway carriages, and other purposes where great strength and durability are required.

WAIKATO COUNTY.

Waerenga Plantation Reserve.

To lay down about 300 acres under golden wattle (*Acacia decurrens*) and black wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) by sowing. To plant about 300 acres with one-year-old plants of red gum (*Eucalyptus rostrata*) and ironbark (*Eucalyptus leucoxydon*), and establish a temporary nursery to raise plants for planting the remainder of the area next season.

TARANAKI COUNTY.

Mount Egmont Reserve, 72,382 Acres.

It is intended to make a detailed examination of portions of this reserve in order to ascertain the cost of replacing the valueless scrubby growth with convertible timber, and the possibility of extending exotic arboreal vegetation above the altitudinal limits attained by native trees.

WHANGAREI COUNTY.

Pukipuhi Forest, 19,682 Acres.

It is proposed to thin out portions of the scrub on the margin of the kauri and make preparations for filling up the gaps with redwood or jarrah; also for planting the open spaces and surrounding the whole with a protective belt of fire-resisting trees.

MANIOTOTO COUNTY.

Plantation Reserves: Gimmerburn, 1,263 Acres; Upper Taieri, 2,051 Acres.

To fence and form nurseries for young plants; to plant a portion of the above with Douglass fir (*Abies Douglassii*), cider gum (*Eucalyptus Gunnii*), and English oak (*Quercus pedunculata*). The entire area to be planted in about three years.

The estimated forest revenue for the year ending the 31st March, 1887, is £3,500, derived exclusively from royalty on the sale of timber. The total expenditure for conservation and the formation of new plantations during the same period, including the salaries of the Conservator and his assistants, is estimated at £7,000. This, of course, does not include the claims for compensation under the Forest-trees Planting Encouragement Act, the equipment and maintenance of the School of Forestry and Agriculture, nor the cost of the agricultural section.

I am fully convinced that the Forestry Department may not only be made self-supporting within five years, but that it will ultimately yield a material addition to the general revenue of the colony; while, concurrently with this benefit, a vast amount of raw material will be preserved for utilization, and new openings created for the profitable employment of labour. But this result can only be effected by the forest and plantation reserves being retained under the control of the department.

FRUIT SECTION.

Under special instructions from the Commissioner of State Forests, inquiries concerning the diseases and parasites of fruit-trees commenced last year have been continued by the Chief Conservator as fully as his primary duties permitted, and a large amount of additional information has been obtained, which will be published in a separate report.

The report on this subject, presented at the close of last session, has been so largely in demand that it is out of print, although the number of copies printed was exceptionally large. This affords satisfactory evidence of the importance of the subject and the general interest taken in it. On the request of the Queensland Government, permission was granted to reprint the report for general circulation in that colony.

Progress has been made in the preparation of drawings to illustrate a descriptive work on the chief fungoid and insect enemies of the fruitgrower, which it is intended to publish as soon as more complete information has been obtained on certain subjects. The work will include an account of the most important remedies, and the best methods of applying them. It has been found practically impossible for the Chief Conservator to keep pace with the large amount of new work continually cropping up in connection with fruit cultivation without occasionally neglecting his primary duties. This is especially the case during the early spring months, when forest and plantation work requires his undivided attention; but it is at this period that close and continued observation is most necessary to ascertain the life-history of the most destructive insect pests. With a view of meeting the legitimate claims of fruitgrowers, and assisting the development of an important branch of cultivation, it is proposed to engage the services of a competent biologist, whose time should be entirely devoted