

disappeared owing to the incessant grazing by goats—probably the greatest curse to young trees in existence. . . . The clearing and grubbing of land for agriculture has caused the deforestation of considerable tracts of country. Where this clearing has been limited to plain lands and the upland of gentler grade no objection can be raised, except as regards the great want of judgment too often shown in failing to leave broad belts of timber for shelter against winds and clumps of trees for a protection for stock. The total clearance of all timber without regard to this very important consideration in many places has added largely to the trying and blighting effects of both hot and cold winds, and the clearing of the steeper hillsides for agriculture has produced very unsatisfactory results in many ways."

NECESSITY FOR AFFORESTATION.

Although the needs of the great Indian Empire are infinitely more urgent and widespread than those of this Dominion can ever be, yet in proportion it may be urged that the general principles underlying the modern system of forest-conservation and reforestation in all countries apply equally to New Zealand as to the older civilisations. The more this subject is studied, the more one is impressed with the fact that judicious afforestation is the backbone of success in the important industries of every nation. As has been frequently pointed out, the cutting and utilisation of the indigenous forests by the sawmillers is proceeding at such a rapid rate in New Zealand that it is only the matter of a very few years (comparatively) when the greater bulk of our timber-supply must be obtained from abroad. Each year sees the output larger, and the resources of the Dominion smaller, and, although the Government has taken the matter in hand with commendable foresight by the establishment of State plantations of timber-trees, yet it must be at least from thirty to forty years before any great supply can be calculated on from this source. Under these circumstances it appears imperative to restrict the present indiscriminate sawmilling of all available forests to such moderate extent as will insure their gradual disappearance synchronous with the development and growth of the State plantations, so that as the one fails the other may take its place. Unless some such steps as these are immediately taken, it follows that, although for a few years the demand can be fairly well satisfied, before long there would be no reserve of native timber, and the price would rise to a figure which would seriously embarrass many of the growing industries of New Zealand.

TIMBER OUTPUT AND RESOURCES.

In last year's report on the timber industry it was shown with what rapid strides the saw-milling industry was increasing, and it may be well to briefly recount them.

The Sawmilling Industry in New Zealand.

Year.	Number of Mills.	Hands employed.	Quantity of Timber sawn per Annum.	Cutting-capacity per Annum.
			Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.
1895	299	4,055	191,053,466	...
1900	334	6,085	261,583,518	...
1905	414	6,912	413,289,742	704,930,600
1907	411	7,139	432,031,611	718,940,000

Estimates of Milling-timber in New Zealand.

Year.	Kauri.	Totara, Rimu, and Kahikatea.	Others.	Total.
	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.
1905	1,112,019,000	28,730,500,000	12,880,431,000	42,723,000,000
1907	646,041,000	22,840,000,000	12,300,000,000	35,786,041,000

Out of the above quantity of approximately 36,000,000,000 superficial feet of milling-timber for the whole of New Zealand, it may be mentioned that no less than 13,445,000,000 superficial feet, or more than one-third, exists in the two land districts of Nelson and Westland, and when it is remembered with what difficulty the timber can be reached, cut, and marketed, it will be seen that the available supply for practical purposes shrinks to a comparatively small amount, as a large quantity of forest, though suitable for milling, is too inaccessible for payable conversion into sawn timber. The present supply of indigenous timber may therefore be reckoned at about fifty years at the existing increasing rate of consumption.

THE TIMBER INDUSTRY IN NEW ZEALAND DURING 1907-8.

Although no general attempt has been made for the past year to collect data on the above subject, yet, as two of the Commissioners of Crown Lands have furnished details regarding the industry in their districts, they are appended for general information.