

Your Commissioners are of opinion that the reclamation and subsequent afforestation of the 100,000 acres of sandy waste included in the narrow peninsula and the protection of the balance of the lands from the advancing sand-drift is a matter calling for early and serious consideration.

AFFORESTATION.

One of the areas from which the reservation is recommended to be uplifted is what is known as the Kapiro Reserve, situated quite close to Kerikeri Inlet, Bay of Islands, and contains about 14,000 acres. This area, in the opinion of your Commissioners, is specially adapted for afforestation. The land is nearly all ploughable, and quite close to the deep water of the first-class Bay of Islands harbour.

As to the need of afforestation there is no conflict of opinion, and here it may be interesting to quote a short extract from the report of the Royal Commission on Forestry, which gives concisely the economic aspect of the question:—

“We are fully persuaded, however, that, given cheap land, economical management, and the right kind of trees to plant, afforestation can be made a highly profitable investment for the State, apart from the secondary benefits of having a good supply of timber to meet the public demand and a possible amelioration of climatic conditions. We would recommend that in future, to keep the forestry operations on a sound commercial basis—(1) That the Prisons Department should have a credit note for the value of all work done by prison labour; (2) that $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest should be debited annually to the cost of the previous year's operations; (3) that the rental value of the land as assessed by the Government Valuation Department, also on a $4\frac{1}{2}$ -per-cent. basis, should be debited to the Forestry Account.

“In considering the expansion of the afforestation operations of the State the length of time that the present timber-supply from the indigenous forests will last must be considered. According to evidence before us, the estimate of 33,060,883,437 superficial feet available in the indigenous forests in 1909 is at best a guess, and no one can truly say whether the amount be too much or too little. Our opinion is that it is not safe to conclude that there will be any supply of moment at the expiration of thirty years from the present time, and that unless more stringent methods are adopted to conserve the supply as far as possible the period may be even shortened. From the above it is clear that sufficient provision must be made for the future if we are not to run the risk of a considerable deficiency in our supply of timber. The countries of the Old World are a striking object-lesson to us in regard to afforestation operations. It may be stated briefly that afforestation has been practised to a considerable extent in all civilized countries, and that where economy of method is closely followed it has proved a financial success. The thickly peopled countries of Europe do not begrudge the necessary areas for the work. Even in densely populated Belgium the forest area is 17·7 per cent. of the total area, or 0·2 acre per inhabitant. In Germany the area under forest is 34,989,675 acres. This forms 25·89 per cent. of the total land area and 0·62 acres *per capita*.”

SUITABILITY OF GUM LANDS FOR FRUITGROWING.

Your Commissioners are quite convinced that large areas of the gum lands are excellently adapted for apple-growing. There seems to be no question that there is a large and unsatisfied demand for apples for export. With some encouragement given to the smaller settlers we feel assured that a large industry can be built up in the course of a few years. As far as the man of small means is concerned, the process must be a gradual one, for he has to live while the fruit-trees are coming into bearing. Such a man, it is suggested, might put in an acre of apples the first year, and then year after year increase the area.