

It will not be out of place here to quote from the remarks of Mr. C. E. Lane-Poole, Conservator of the Forest Department of Western Australia, in the preface to the report on Australian forestry (by Mr. Hutchins) published by the Government of Western Australia, as showing the estimation in which Mr. Hutchins is held in connection with these matters: "Among the many distinguished members of the British Association who visited Australia in 1914 was the well-known forester, Mr. D. E. Hutchins. A graduate of l'Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts, Nancy, France, he began his forestry career in the Woods and Forests Department of India. After some years of tropical experience he was transferred to Cape Colony, where he remained for twenty-three years, and was, it is universally acknowledged, the greatest factor in spreading a love of forests and an interest in arboriculture in that almost treeless country. Mr. Hutchins made a special study of extra-tropical forestry, and introduced into South Africa species from all parts of the extra-tropical world, and among them the sylvia of Australia claimed his special attention. To-day all through those colonies, from Cape Point to the Limpopo River, may be seen extensive plantations of the Australian eucalyptus. With the development of the East African colonies Mr. Hutchins, who was then Conservator of Forests in Cape Colony, was chosen by the Colonial Office to organize a Forest Department in British East Africa. At various times during his career he has been called upon to visit and report on the forestry problems of different countries. His report on the forestry in Cyprus was furnished to the Colonial Office, and is a particularly interesting work."

The Board view with great pleasure the fact that Mr. Hutchins was employed to commence the demarcation of the forests in New Zealand when he was sent to demarcate the Waipoua Forest, and to indicate the sections to be retained for forestry purposes. It is hoped that this is only the beginning of this vitally important question to New Zealand, and that steps will very shortly be taken to demarcate the remaining forest areas which are suitable for timber purposes, and which would not interfere with settlement, as no time should be lost in completing this work, which has already been carried out in the neighbouring Australian States. The limits of our forests are so curtailed that in a few years' time, unless this is done and the Forestry Branch placed under the control of a trained forester, the whole of our native forests will have disappeared. Demarcation of our present forests is as important as the planting annually of a sufficient area for future wants, and should be gone on with. It is essential for conservation and demarcation purposes that the Forestry Branch should no longer be attached to the Lands Department, but should be separate, although it might remain under the control of the Minister of Lands. The Board has already recommended the Government to set aside areas suitable for future planting, especially in those districts which are easy of access, if there is a possibility of securing land which is not required for settlement purposes.

We would take this opportunity to say that we asked your predecessor to have Mr. Hutchins's report printed, as it is of the utmost importance to New Zealand that this should be done. He verbally promised to comply with our request, and to supply the Board with a number of copies of the report.

PHOSPHATES AND ARTIFICIAL MANURES.

The question of phosphates and artificial manures has received the very fullest consideration, and many interviews with Mr. Aston, the Government Chemist, Mr. Morgan, Director of the Geological Survey, and the Board in connection therewith took place. When Mr. Aston went to England we asked your predecessor to instruct him to make the fullest inquiry he could on the subject, and this Mr. Aston did at his own expense, and the information he collected was of great value. He made full inquiries in America about the cost of the Florida deposits, and when in London interviewed many of the companies which deal with raw phosphates. On his return he made a lengthy report on the whole question, a copy of which your predecessor was good enough to send to us. A promising source of raw phosphate seemed to be in Egypt, on the Red Sea, at a place called Safaga Bay; and Mr. Aston's inquiry seemed to indicate that this phosphate could be brought in returning troopships, and you were urged to get a certain quantity out for experimental purposes. A few hundred tons were accordingly brought out to New Zealand. The nearest source to New Zealand of raw phosphate, however, is in the Pacific Islands, from which an ample supply can be obtained under normal conditions at a reasonable price.

The Board fully recognize the great importance of this matter to the New Zealand farmers. Nearly the whole of the land in New Zealand, according to Mr. Aston's analysis, is wanting in this plant-food, and the Government would be well advised to take any steps it can to cheapen the supply of this necessary manure. It is certain that New Zealand must increase its products to meet its engagements after the war, and there is nothing more likely to bring this about than a cheap supply of phosphates for the farmer. So long as the Board is in existence no opportunity will be lost of securing or suggesting any possible means of supplying farmers with the cheaper phosphatic manure.

Steps were taken by the Board to ensure the continuance of the present supply of phosphates at a time when it was feared it might be stopped through the commandeering of vessels by the military authorities, and we are glad to say our recommendations were successful.

In July last the Board had a lengthy conference with Mr. Morgan, Director of the Geological Survey, with regard to making a careful search in various parts of New Zealand for deposits of agricultural lime and phosphate rock. Mr. Morgan pointed out that, owing to several members of his staff having enlisted, the Department was rather short-handed, but he informed the Board that a sum of money had been allocated for the purpose of locating limestone-deposits throughout the Dominion, and that a search for deposits of phosphate rock would be made at the same time. The Mines Department was making arrangements to examine the most likely localities, and hoped to be able to furnish a comprehensive and exhaustive report on the subject during the coming