

1885.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD, 1884-85

(SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

**MEETINGS** of the Board were held on the 30th September, 1884, and 3rd February, and 13th May, 1885.

During the year the total expenditure on labour has been £295 4s. 7d., but the ordinary expenditure on the maintenance of the domain has averaged less than £18 per month.

The extra expenditure has been for seven chains of new fencing and the renewal of the boundary fence, which has now been erected for sixteen years. The posts are of black birch (*Fagus solandra*); and, even now, only those posts which are in undrained spots have rotted at the foot.

A large number of additional seats have been placed in the gardens for the accommodation of visitors; and further earthworks had to be undertaken with the view of improving the main entrance from the Tinakori Road, and to remove several large landslips that occurred near the Sydney Street entrance. The Ranger's cottage had also to be repaired.

The chief item of extra expenditure has been for the management of the nursery-ground, and the raising of trees and shrubs and packing them for distribution. This latter work is a very serious charge on the slender resources of the gardens; and, as by far the greater proportion of the trees are distributed gratis to public bodies, this branch of the service performed by the garden brings in only a very small return.

The ground is now ready for laying out the educational collection of natural orders of plants, and especially those represented by species indigenous to New Zealand; and as soon as the weather is favourable this important work will be completed.

The olive trees have thriven well during the past season, and afford every prospect of becoming thoroughly established.

An important return has been prepared and attached to this report, giving a census of the coniferous trees which have been successfully grown in the gardens, and stating those which have born fertile cones. The experience thus put on record will be of service in assisting the establishment of systematic forestry in the colony.

The number of trees and plants distributed to public bodies during the year has been 2,500, in addition to which many thousands of smaller-sized trees and shrubs have been sent out. The number issued to private individuals has been 1,350. The charge made for this is only sufficient to cover the expense of packing.

The stock of young trees now on hand is smaller than usual, as the seeds imported in 1884 by Government, on which dependence was placed, failed to germinate in most cases. This was the first attempt that had been made to get them from the Eastern States of America through the London agent, and evidently this plan of procedure should be avoided for the future.

The supply of seeds for the current year was obtained direct from America as formerly, and, although not yet thoroughly tested, appear to be of excellent quality. These seeds have been distributed in about 3,229 packets to all parts of the colony, according to the attached schedule.

The growth of the hickory and black walnut from the imported nuts promises to be at last successful, and it will be a great advantage to the colony if extensive plantations of these trees, which afford timber of great value for furniture and carriage-building, were made.

The seeds which are now collected from the coniferous trees grown in the gardens show great vitality, and germinate more readily than the imported seeds. The species mentioned in the attached schedule have been raised from the New-Zealand-grown seed during the past year.

During the past year the insect blights that affect the various trees and shrubs in the gardens have been made the subject of a careful investigation by Mr. W. M. Maskell. The result of this work is being embodied in a valuable monograph on the subject of insect blights and their treatment, which, the Board strongly urge, should be published in a fully illustrated form for public information.