

ments in that splendid work, "The Flora of New Zealand," one of the most complete expositions upon the flora of any country ever published.

After a few years of good work the department collapsed, and since that time New Zealand has permitted her noble forests to be devastated, her valuable timber to be recklessly cut, burnt, and otherwise destroyed. The forest vandal here, as elsewhere in the Southern Hemisphere, has been allowed to "run amuck," and the splendid trees of the forest have fallen victims to the stroke of the reckless axeman and the torch of the kauri-gum seeker. Here again, in the heyday of timber prosperity, the sawmiller and splitter were allowed to mow down the forests, and the nondescript gum-seeker to burn down in thousands the noblest timber tree that ever graced a forest—that tree which Cook looked upon with delight, and which Banks described in such glowing terms to the wondering *savants* of his age. This tree—the kauri—the noblest the world has ever seen, has been ruthlessly destroyed by the vandal gum-digger for the sake of its resin.

#### *Injuring the Cause of Forestry.*

The lack of sustained effort on the part of Australasian Governments, which has been illustrated in these records of New South Wales and New Zealand, has done serious injury to the cause of forestry in these colonies. Men trained in the science naturally look askance at appointments which, under such conditions as have hitherto obtained, give them no chance of doing themselves credit, or their employers—the public—justice, and the tenure of which is so insecure. They find that they cannot utilise their knowledge to produce the practical results they aim at, and, if permitted, could easily attain, and the work of reform is thus stifled.

Government after Government have been warned by experts of the result inevitable if forestry is neglected. Curiously enough too, these warnings have been almost invariably recognised as fully justified, and the necessity for reform conceded—at the time—to be most urgent and important. There the matter is allowed to rest, and nothing is done; or if, as in the cases of New South Wales and New Zealand, an advance is made, a retreat soon follows. Again and again the rights of the public are subordinated to the clamour of the sawmiller and splitter, *et hoc genus omne*, who think nothing and care less about anything more than the best immediate profit they can make. Ministers, who should be active in the defence of public property, are quiescent, if not acquiescent; and though, as in New Zealand, young trees do not grow readily to replace those cut down, governing bodies are content to let matters run on till there is a fresh alarm at the state of the timber-supplies. This acts as a fresh application of whip and spur. Then once more a sudden rush of patriotism occurs. Leading politicians vie with each other in supporting a scheme of reform. This is adopted, the expert's plan of operations fully approved, and often made the subject of much laudatory comment. For a year or two he is permitted to fight his way against opposing interests, and make steady progress. Another turn of the wheel, and—Hey! presto! a new Minister, by a few strokes of his pen, undoes the labour of years, and the disgusted head of the department either resigns or is dismissed, or, if he elects still to struggle on, finds himself so "cribbed, cabined, and confined," that he can do little effective work. The Minister probably plumes himself upon saving a few paltry thousands, and strives to make political capital out of it, though his action generally involves an actual money loss to the public ten times as great as the saving effected.

#### *South Australia.*

South Australia, however, can claim distinction as the one Australian colony which has steadily supported forestry organization. This colony had the advantage of possessing an earnest and well informed forest reformer, Dr. Kruhauff, M.P., who brought the subject prominently under notice in the South Australian Legislature. A Forest Board, consisting of Dr. Kruhauff, the late Dr. Schomburgk (Director of the Botanic Gardens), and Mr. Goyder (Surveyor-General) was appointed. These gentlemen went to work in a large-hearted spirit and framed the Act which has made forestry in South Australia so valuable a feature in the State economy.

In reference to the work set before them, it may be mentioned that in their colony the absolute necessity for forest conservation, and especially culture, was more apparent than in other places. The generally treeless character of the great plains of the interior caused the public to encourage the forester in conserving the few wooded areas the colony depended upon for timber, and extending the forests by plantation. Hence, the South Australian foresters enjoy the rare and enviable advantage of being exempt from hostile interference, political or other, at every turn. The department wisely gave at the outset special attention to plantation, and, after the Board had completed its labours, and a Conservator had been appointed, entered upon a useful career and continues to flourish, to the great advantage of South Australia.

Thus it is that this colony has a well-organized Forestry Department, under good supervision, with locally trained officers, practically unfettered in carrying out the details of forest management. The department is in a thriving condition, and makes solid progress year after year, as its forests are managed from an expert point of view, and not, as elsewhere, made subservient to political expediency.

#### *Tasmania.*

In 1886 Tasmania made a commencement at forest conservation, and the Government did me the honour of appointing me their first Conservator. The comparatively small revenue of that colony, however, prevented the allocation for forestry work of sufficient funds, and the progress made was small in proportion, though a scientific system was attempted. On my acceptance in 1888, however, of a similar office under the Victorian Government, a successor was appointed in Tasmania who had no forest training or experience. Hence in that colony also scientific treatment of forests has been inaugurated and then permitted to cease, without a chance of attaining its legitimate and certain end.