

have been made in advance, and the district properly tested as to the capabilities for afforestation before incurring a large expenditure.

We have earlier on in this report spoken in the highest terms of the nursery operations. The present Superintending Nurserymen are continuing to carry them on in an equally if not more creditable manner. The houses, implements, and stock are in the best condition possible. The only criticism we can offer is on the method of procuring seed; this is gone into fully in Part 10, and it is certainly a striking defect, but one which cannot be attributed to the Superintending Nurserymen.

To sum up our views as to the present operations of the State, and whether they are conducted on satisfactory and progressive lines, we consider that, as compared with the past, the management under the direction of the two Superintending Nurserymen, and they again under the Under-Secretary for Lands, is better than in the past, but that there is still room for improvement in the matters specially criticized above. Trees are still being planted which are not suitable; special methods for reducing the expense of establishing the plantations, such as sowing *in situ*, are not being tried; the fire-breaks are not adequate; there is not sufficient provision for educating the young men of the branch in forestry; the method of ordering and procuring seeds could be improved upon; too little attention is being paid to the establishment of quick-rotating crops of trees.

We know quite well the difficulties under which the Superintending Nurserymen have to carry on their very responsible duties. They are really responsible for the whole management—on them all depends—and yet they have no real power, as above them comes the head of the Department, who need not of necessity in the least be acquainted with forestry matters, or have much sympathy therewith. They have also a vast amount of departmental duties to perform, and, in addition to all else, attend to the training of their subordinates, and have to give advice *re* tree-planting to private individuals and public bodies. In short, their duties are multifarious. Further, they have been brought up in the system as it prevails, and it is hardly to be expected that they could make many radical changes in what they have been forced to practise for years, nor possibly would such changes have been tolerated. In Messrs. Robinson and Goudie the Department possesses two most valuable and zealous servants, who are full of enthusiasm in their work, and who are doing their best to make State afforestation in New Zealand a success.

With regard to the future, we consider that certain changes should be made. Two methods are available—namely, either the creation of a special Forestry Department, or the forestry to be, as at present, a branch of the Lands Department. There are valid arguments in favour of both propositions, but after careful consideration we consider that forestry matters should continue to be dealt with under a special branch of the Lands Department, because the branch as proposed below would deal not only with the plantations but with the indigenous forests. As the Lands Department already possesses in the Commissioners of Crown Lands and Crown Lands Rangers the necessary machinery, and men more or less skilled in the work, a great saving would be effected in comparison with setting up another Department with men new to many branches of the work and with a new and complicated machinery. Further, as the land on which the forestry operation would take place would be under the administration of the Lands Department, friction might arise between the two Departments. Nor do we think the magnitude of the operations as yet demand a new Department, but that such is rather a thing of the future.

We consider that the Under-Secretary for Lands has so many other duties to perform that it is quite impossible that he can afford the time necessary for proper supervision of the branch, or for the special studies that the control of a subject so technical as forestry entails. We therefore recommend—