THE WORLD'S FOREST RESOURCES AND THEIR RELATION TO NEW ZEALAND.

World statistics consistently indicate a steady increase in wood consumption and importation by nearly all the leading import countries. There are three countries which can increase their exports without lessening their forest capital—Russia, Finland, and Sweden. This increase will be needed in western Europe to make up growing deficits. The tendency is to overcutting by all wood-export countries, a policy which will sooner or later lead to universal shortage, with no surplus to draw upon. (This trend is now being offset by a new economic force—that is, the introduction of rational forest-management by all civilized peoples, for they find that they must make a diminished forest area supply an increased population.)

A concise *résumé* of the situation is about as follows:—

Import Countries.

(*a*.) Countries which with a highly developed management and important forest possessions themselves produce much wood, but in spite of this, on account of their important industries, cannot do without foreign wood. These countries are France, Switzerland, Belgium, and the German group. They are heavy competitors for forest supplies, and are rapidly increasing the amounts of their imports, *an increase which is certain to continue.*

(*b*.) Countries with a highly developed forest-management and a small domestic wood-consumption: Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece.

(*c*.) Countries with a small or unimportant forest-management and with small forest areas: United Kingdom, Holland, and Denmark.

(*d*.) Countries with poorly managed forests and not highly developed: Servia and Bulgaria.

Export Countries.

Russia: This country is not cutting anywhere near its "possibility" (the Director-General states that about one-half of the annual growth is cut). From European Russia will be drawn the supplies necessary for the accommodation of western Europe, and it is quite improbable that this source of supply will be of importance to New Zealand. It has been stated that "Apparently European Russia can supply all European needs, even if it increased threefold." This is very doubtful.

Siberia has a reported area of nearly 400,000,000 acres of forest land (71 per cent. coniferous and 29 per cent. hardwoods). This gigantic area contains a large proportion of water, swamps, and burns, and is located in poorly developed regions with insufficient means of transport. From what meagre reports that are available there is an inexhaustible supply of material in this great hinterland, but with the rapid industrial expansion of the Orient the probabilities are that its export offerings will be absorbed by China and Japan.

Finland: This country has a very high percentage of its land surface under forests, and is in a position to increase its wood-exportation, which will be largely absorbed by Europe.

Sweden is cutting to its limit, and it is doubtful whether its sphere of influence in the future will extend beyond Europe.

Norway has overcut its annual increment, and it is probable that export supplies will gradually shrink in the next generation.

Austria-Hungary group: Overcutting of the annual yield has been going on for some time, and this overcutting will have to be reduced if the capital stocks are to be maintained. In any event, its foreign offerings will be of only European value.

Rumania: Its small export surplus is absorbed in the Balkan region.

Canada and United States: It is estimated that Canada has a visible supply of merchantable timber of over 900,000,000,000 ft., but in considering Canada its relation to the great republic to the south of it must always be borne in mind. The close intimate relations that exist between these two countries will have a large bearing on the future timber conditions existing in North America. In the United States there is an estimated supply which would last that country about fifty years, and if the Canadian's visible surplus is included this period may be extended to sixty-five years. The American people are becoming vitally concerned over the prospect of impending famine, and at the present time the possibility of imposing restriction on export of timber is being discussed. But even if this were not done, and the export of timber was freely allowed, prices will very soon be on a luxury basis. The Canadian surplus easily finds its way into the American market, and from the standpoint of price for off-shore shipments no material difference is noted. The surplus of North America will be always eagerly absorbed by industrial Europe.

Other Countries.

China and Australia are importing countries.

Japan and India export valuable hardwoods and import large quantities of softwoods.

The Philippine Islands, Ceylon, Straits Settlements, Indo-China are too little explored to give any basis for definite predictions, but in any event their exports will be solely of valuable hardwoods which are not important here.

Africa exports only costly hardwoods, and the importation of softwoods is increasing in all but the central part. It is understood that there is an area of 400,000 square miles of valuable timber land in Central Africa, but much of it is at present quite inaccessible as far as the world's markets are concerned. The South African forests are entirely inadequate to supply home needs, and imports are bound to increase.

In South America there are vast untouched forests, principally in Brazil, estimated at 1,000,000 square miles. These great inaccessible forests will be opened up to supply home con-