

WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL AND SUBURBAN WATER SUPPLY BOARD'S FORESTS

Recently, members of the Executive of the Forest and Bird Protection Society accepted an invitation from His Worship the Mayor of Wellington, Mr. F. J. Kitts, to visit the forests under the control of the board. Under the guidance of Mr. P. Klocek, the board's Chief Forester, and Mr. J. Stanton, the party visited most of the areas over which operations are being carried out. In the August issue of the journal last year we published an account of the board's holdings, and naturally the Executive wished to see chiefly the areas being milled and those being planted with exotic trees for timber-production purposes. The bulk of the land being planted with exotics is land milled in previous years and farmed until gorse and scrub took over, and in general is not on slopes supplying water to the board's installations. Mr. Klocek assured members that the board's policy is to retain indigenous forest on all protection slopes and water-catchment areas, and to allow the indigenous forest to regenerate wherever it appeared likely to do so. He told the members that he and his staff were well aware of the need for removing noxious animals from the forests and that all possible steps would be taken to bring that about. The Executive members present were convinced that the board and its staff are keen to preserve the catchment areas so far as is possible under indigenous vegetation, and to use other "gone back" land wisely in establishing in perpetuity timber-producing forests for revenue purposes. The total area for this purpose is a very small proportion of the board's holdings, and is land comparatively close to settled areas which would be a fire hazard if not placed under proper control and development.

Mr. Klocek proved himself a genial and extremely interesting guide, and invited the Executive to visit the areas of native forest under the board's control on the western side of the ranges between the Hutt Valley and the Waikanae-Paekakariki coastal hills. Such a visit will be arranged some time during fine weather. He is a man with a fine record of war service in many countries under different flags, service which took him from Russia, down through Europe to France and England and then to central Africa, as escapee, refugee soldier, and officer.

DEATH DUTIES ON TIMBER

In the editorial of the November issue last year we recommended strongly that the assessment of the timber value of trees on farms for death-duty purposes should be abolished.

In reading his Budget Speech this year the Minister of Finance stated *inter alia* that the Government recognised the value of trees to agriculture and to the country's welfare, and announced that henceforth the value of the timber in the trees would be exempt from death duties.

At the best, levying death duties on the timber value of trees in farm shelter belts and plantations was an iniquitous imposition and a discouragement to those who wanted to develop their holdings wisely. In many parts of the world, woodlots on farms provide not only shelter for stock and protection for water and soil, but add a tremendous total to the country's timber supplies. This is important in a world where timber is becoming more valuable with each passing year. We congratulate the Minister on his decision, which will be welcomed by everybody with the interest of the country at heart. We trust that farmers will now plant trees and more trees.

TREE PLANTING BY DUNEDIN BRANCH

Members of the Society recently spent a busy Saturday afternoon planting a variety of native trees and shrubs alongside a section of the northern motorway. Trees included kowhai, lemonwood and other pittosporums; broadleaf, several ribbonwoods, including *Hoheria angustifolia* and *H. sextostylosa*; the South Island cedar (*Libocedrus bidwillii*); totara; *Podocarpus acutifolia*; *Nothopanax colensoi*; and the pepper tree (*Drimys colorata*). Flowering shrubs included two species of *Veronica*, several senecios such as *laxifolius*, *rotundifolius*, and *bennettii* as well as a hybrid type; and *Olearia coriacea*, *O. macrodonta*, *O. avicenniaefolia* and *O. wai-kariensis*. Flax, toitoi, and cabbage trees were also added to the plantation. Several specimens of a number of the species were planted.

The Society was pleased to find that, in spite of the abnormally dry season following last year's planting, only a small proportion had not survived and most of the remainder were growing well.