

certain of the best trees grow some 50 per cent. more slowly. Compare, for instance, the totara figured in the report of the New Zealand Forest Commission of 1913 with the growth of stinkwood and white-pear reported in the last South African Forest Yearly Report.

There is nothing remarkable about the forest-work that is going on in South Africa; it is simply what is being done throughout the civilized world—all over Europe, North America, Japan, and more recently Chile, while within the last year or two the Argentine and even China have also taken the first steps in forestry. What is very remarkable is that a civilized country like New Zealand, with forestry naturally indicated as one of its chief industries, should as yet have not taken the first steps in scientific forestry.

FORESTRY AND THE COST OF LIVING.

The loss of the forest (apart from present war conditions) may be regarded as one of the chief causes of the rise in the cost of living in New Zealand. Timber for house-building, and abundant firewood, are prime necessities of the household. But these have been banished to a distance from every town in New Zealand. It made no difference whether there was economical forest land near the town or not—down went the forest and up went the cost of living. At Brussels one steps out of one of the best streets (the Avenue Louise) into the Bois de la Cambre and the Forest of Soignes, which is the second-largest State forest of Belgium.

At Cape Town, where the coal-mines are at a distance as with Wellington, firewood is the poor man's fuel, coal the rich man's. It is cheaper in the suburbs of Cape Town to grow wattle and eucalypt firewood than to buy coal. I speak with the experience of a householder of twenty years' standing. I grew all the firing required for my household in the grounds round my house. A supply for a year's cooking and four months' warming fires is what is required at Cape Town.

Suppose the mountains near Wellington were under good forest conserved by the State, that would mean cheap house-building timber, cheap firewood, and considerable employment for the men tending the forest and working the timber and firewood—some twenty times the employment afforded by sheep-runs or cattle-walks. But often when the forest is destroyed the grassing fails wholly or in part, and then production ceases, and the area becomes a pathless waste of gorse, fern, bramble, and manuka scrub.

The French have a saying, "Tout revient à la forêt," referring to the value of the forest in providing man with so many of his