

FORESTS AND THEIR VALUE.

Points for Consideration.

Mr. H. H. Corbin (Forestry Lecturer at the Adelaide University) gave an illustrated lecture, entitled "Trees," under the auspices of the South Australian Society of Arts at the Adelaide Institute Building on Tuesday evening. Mr. J. White (President of the Society) occupied the chair.

The lecturer stated that he desired to emphasize the timber asset of the State in the United States of America, even more than in Canada, extreme devastation of the forests and wild life was, according to advice from authorities there, in progress. That, it was said, was the fault of the people generally, and not of the foresters and others exploiting these resources. He referred to the tragic slaughter that had been practised in Michigan. A professor, writing in The Swiss Forestry Journal, had stated, in referring to the Australian eucalypt forests, that the devastation there was painfully apparent. In some places afforestation was being introduced. The absence of trees had led to disasters from floods. No one, however, referred to the real cause, but blamed a change in the seasons for it. He quoted from a publication "Forests Policy of the British Empire," by an eminent English forest authority, dealing with the South Australian forests in 1906. In it was stressed the diminution going on in local timber. He personally considered that the position at present was really worse than then.

Ensuring Future Supplies.
At least a million acres of prime milling forests was necessary to ensure the requirements of the State for time to come. The raw material was needed for the secondary industries. It could be imported, but only at continually increasing cost. The importations of timber to South Australia were steadily growing. Quite as good timber as that could be grown locally, and more quickly than elsewhere. Well-managed forests were certainly monetarily successful. They gave substantial returns. Waste land could be broken in to produce good timber. Afforestation should be done in the areas with the heavier rainfall, and anywhere having a rainfall of 20 to 25 inches annually would be satisfactory. It could be done by the Government and by private owners.

Instead of levying taxes on private land devoted to the purpose of producing timber, it would be economically sound to grant the owners a bonus. Suitable education was needed to enable growers of forests to obtain the best results, quite as much as it was in connection with wheatgrowing. It was desirable that proper attention should be given to the production of soft woods. About two-thirds of the timber consumption at present was soft woods. An important point about forests was their steadily increasing value. They were easily established if the right class of land were selected and a sufficient sum of money were made available. It should always be remembered that the overseas supply of softwoods was decreasing. Referring to the fears which sometimes prevailed concerning the danger of forests being consumed by fire before the timber was ready for cutting, Mr. Corbin said that with the exercise of proper precautions there was little danger. The precautions should be continuous and not merely in summer time. When once forests were established the cost of maintenance was small. The trees grew while the people slept, and in South Australia they repaid their cost by the time they were 16 years old.

An educative series of lantern views illustrative of South Australian and overseas forests and afforestation was exhibited. At the instance of Dr. H. Basedow, seconded by Mr. H. E. Fuller (secretary of the society), the lecturer was thanked and was congratulated on his appointment as Professor of Forestry at the Auckland University (N.Z.).

DR. HEATON'S EXPLANATION.

The first of the annual series of University Extension Lectures was given on Tuesday evening, when Dr. H. Heaton spoke on the protocol framed by the assembly of the League of Nations during the 1923 session.

The lecturer pointed out that the protocol was the third attempt of the League of Nations to strengthen the machinery of peace and prevent war. The Covenant of the League of Nations itself made certain provisions which had necessarily to be more or less general and tentative. After tracing the achievements of the various meetings of the assembly since 1919, the speaker said that the central point of the protocol was that it endeavoured to "outlaw" war. The Covenant of the League of Nations had been much less ambitious; it had tried to prevent war by urging disarmament, and by establishing machinery for mediation and conciliation. But even after a dispute had gone through all stages of discussion it would still, under certain circumstances, lead to a war on which the League could express no judgment. The protocol endeavoured to close this gap, and thus make all aggressive war wrong in the eyes of the rest of the world. It aimed at three things—at compulsory arbitration in all disputes, at the adequate protection of those who accepted arbitration against aggressors, and consequently, by promising co-operative defence, to an attacked nation, it hoped to make possible steps towards drastic disarmament.

Provisions Aimed At.
Arbitration on all legal matters, he explained, was to be entrusted to the permanent Court of International Justice. All other disputes must be submitted to the judgment of the council, assembly, or other arbitrators, and awards or findings must be accepted. Any nation which refused to submit a dispute, or which refused to accept the decision, and then went to war, was automatically regarded as an aggressor, and all the other members of the League were to pledge themselves loyally and effectively to co-operate in imposing economic boycotts and military, naval, or air "sanctions" on the aggressor. The amount of assistance given by each nation in protecting a nation against an aggressor was to be determined by the contributing nation "in the degree which its geographical position and its particular situation as regards armaments allow;" but, although each nation determined the amount of its assistance, it was pledged by acceptance of the protocol to assist in some measure. This simple method of deciding who was the aggressor brushed aside all such subtleties as were usually adopted by nations which, although aggressors, manoeuvred their victims into the false position of appearing to strike the first blow. The aggressor under the protocol was that nation which refused to accept arbitration as an alternative to war. It was generally hoped at Geneva that the adoption of the security and arbitration proposals would make really possible an early movement towards disarmament, especially on land. The assembly therefore resolved that if three of the great powers and 10 other members of the League accepted the protocol by May, 1925, an international conference of members and non-members of the League should be called in June of this year. But since only France among the big powers had approved the document, the conference had had to be postponed.

Some Misunderstandings.
The protocol was a somewhat difficult document for the layman to understand, concluded Dr. Heaton, and hence many legends and misinterpretations had become widely held. The chief criticism made in Australia was that, by the Japanese amendment to some clauses, Australian exclusive control over immigration and hence over the White Australia policy was liable to infringement. But the protocol gave no new power to the League to interfere in internal affairs or "domestic jurisdiction." Article X of the Covenant expressly pledged the members of the League to respect and preserve against external aggression the territorial integrity and political independence of all members, and it was a truism of international law and practice that immigration control was absolutely a matter of domestic jurisdiction, part of the "political independence" of all self-governing States. Further, the provisions for arbitration and for the declaration that a nation was an aggressor were regarded by leading Australian and British international law experts as strengthening Australia's position rather than weakening it.

A NATIONAL SCHOOL OF FORESTRY.

If, as seems probable, a forestry school on a national scale is really to be established in Australia, it will mean that an important step forward will be made in connection with the policy of securing future timber supplies. The suggestion is not new. So far back as 1921 a sanguine expectation was entertained that some immediate and practical results would accrue from the deliberations of the Inter-State Conference on the matter. Now we have the announcement that the school is to be centred at Canberra under Federal auspices. Probably the location will be acceptable to the States, although, as a Forestry School has already been organised and has been working successfully in South Australia in connection with the University of Adelaide, it might have been better had it been determined to develop this into a national institution. There could hardly have been a better nucleus. What, however, is of chief importance is that a national school should be established and provide the best-known methods of instruction for all the States. In recent years forestry has attained to the position almost of a science. At any rate, to make it efficient, several branches of scientific knowledge must be brought to bear upon it. One big department relates to pests and parasites, and there are of course a number of matters arising out of the nature and habits of different species and varieties of trees, questions of climate, rainfall, and the general character of the soil all requiring scientific treatment. But as in almost every other modern educational institution, the end aimed at in the new school must be practical. Australia is confronted with a big problem in connection with the maintenance of a sufficient supply of timber to meet her own requirements, and in this connection she will be able to draw to only a limited extent on the knowledge acquired in other parts of the world. Sylviculture varies in different latitudes. Methods which yield highly satisfactory results in one place under a given set of conditions may be found not so effective in another part of the world under different conditions. At present the position of Australia calls for prompt and well-directed action. In a spasmodic and unsystematic way something has been accomplished by the different States in the way of afforestation, but much remains to be attempted if we are to discharge our obligations to the generations to follow.

Mr. Lane Poole recently pointed out that Australia is importing 42.18 per cent of its requirements in timber, and he rightly suggests that the proportion is disquieting for so young a country with its comparatively small population. As might be expected, the imported timbers consist largely of soft woods. Our indigenous trees are for the most part of species from which hard wood may be cut. But experience has shown that the pine family will do well in some localities and that there is abundant opportunity for increasing the home-grown supply. The fact that in 1923 the importations of Scandinavian pine totalled \$1,000,000 feet, notwithstanding that the American continent is the chief source of our overseas supplies, indicates how large a field there is for local exploitation. But if satisfactory results are to be achieved, not only will large areas have to be proclaimed as forest reserves, and encouragement given to private land-owners to plant trees where suitable conditions exist, but trained skill and systematised knowledge will have to be applied. In a lecture given this week Mr. H. H. Corbin stated that South Australia needed at least a

ishing supplies in other parts of the world. Inevitably Australia will have to rely on her own resources in the future to a much larger extent than she has hitherto done. Notwithstanding the precautions taken in the older world to conserve and renew forests the demand for timber is fast outstripping the supply. Heavy cutting on the American continent has already gone a long way towards depleting the supplies which represent the growth of ages, and a world pinch is rapidly approaching. When the time comes that an actual shortage is seriously felt the countries least able to meet their own demands will suffer most, for exports will be more or less banned. By taking prompt and intelligent action Australia can place herself in a position which will make her independent of the outside world. Soft woods of the pine varieties can be grown here much more quickly than in the northern hemisphere. Their utility has already been demonstrated. There are vast areas available for their production, and although some years must necessarily elapse between the time of planting and that of reaping a return for the outlay, the investment will prove highly profitable in the end.

HOVER TISER 3.6.25. TREES AND FORESTS.

LECTURE BY MR. CORBIN.

"Trees" was the subject of an instructive lecture given by Mr. H. H. Corbin, under the auspices of the Society of Arts at the Institute Hall, North-terrace, on Tuesday evening. Mr. John White (president of the society) occupied the chair.

The lecturer, who was received with applause, said he wanted to refer to the value of the timber asset of the State. He quoted an authority to show that in the United States even more than in Canada the devastation of forests had been proceeding apace. In Michigan the slaughter of the timber had been so great that the State was now compelled to import. A writer in the "Swiss Forestry Journal" had stated that in Australian eucalypt forests the devastation was painfully apparent. The large majority of the people in Australia had never seen a virgin forest, but there were such areas still in existence in inaccessible places. Afforestation was being introduced in some places. An eminent English authority had written in "Forests Policy of the British Empire," on the forests in South Australia in 1906, pointing out the unsatisfactory position at that date. At the present time it was worse. The State needed at least 1,000,000 acres of prime milling forests to ensure its future supply. Timber was needed for several secondary industries. The cost of importing timber must continually increase unless an effort were made to meet the growing demand from local production. In South Australia soft wood could be produced of quite as good quality as the imported article, and it could be grown more rapidly than in the northern world. Well-managed forests were financially successful. Substantial results could be obtained almost anywhere with a 20 in. or greater rainfall.

Referring to the cultivation of timber by private individuals, the lecturer suggested that instead of charging taxes on land devoted to the purpose, it might be economically sound to grant them a bonus. Suitable education was needed to enable growers to obtain the best results, just as much as it was in connection with wheat growing. It was desirable that more attention should be given to the production of soft wood. About two-thirds of the consumption was soft wood. An important point about forests was their steadily increasing value in cash. Forests were easily established if the right land were selected and a sufficient amount of money made available. It should always be remembered that the overseas supply of soft wood was decreasing. Local forests would be likely to have a greatly increased value in years to come.

Speaking of the fears which sometimes prevailed concerning the danger of forests being consumed by fire before the timber was ready for cutting, Mr. Corbin said with the exercise of proper precautions there was little danger. Precautions should be taken all the year round and not merely in summer. When once the forests were established the cost of maintenance was small; the trees grew while those who planted them slept, and in South Australia they repaid their cost by the time they were 16 years old. The re-establishment of forests when the trees were cut for timber, if a proper policy were pursued, cost very little. (Applause.)

A fine series of lantern views lent additional interest to the lecture. Dr. H. Basedow and Mr. H. E. Fuller on behalf of the meeting, cordially congratulated Mr. Corbin on his appointment to the position of Professor of Forestry at Auckland University.

million acres of prime milling forest to ensure its future supply. Obviously such a large portion of the land of the State is to be devoted to any one form of production the best ascertainable methods of dealing with the industry should be used. A National School of Forestry may be expected to secure for each of the States a band of highly qualified experts, and indirectly should have a salutary influence in the moulding of the general policy concerning the organization and development of forestry departments.

One indication of the urgent need for a vigorous forward movement in connection with timber conservation and planting is to be found in the rapidly dimin-