

SABLE ISLAND.

By Mr. Stephens :

Q. Does the wind usually come from the same direction ?

A. Not always, but we have the plantations so placed as to break the force of the wind as much as possible from all points. Some interesting work has been done during the past year in planting trees on Sable Island in the Atlantic. This island is about 80 miles from the Nova Scotia coast and 153 miles from Halifax. It is made up largely of a series of sand-hills, formed of white sand, which are so blown about by the wind that the configuration of the land is continually changing. Furthermore, the west end of the island has been washed away with such rapidity that within the past fifteen years the lighthouse at that end has had to be removed twice to prevent it from being washed away by the sea, and the island which about 100 years ago was nearly 40 miles long is now only 21 miles long. It is in the midst of a number of sand banks and bars where wrecks are frequent. It is of the greatest importance that this island be preserved from destruction, and the Department of Marine and Fisheries, under whose management this is, requested me some time ago to take the matter into consideration and see if some method could be suggested whereby tree-planting might be introduced there, and to endeavour to find out what varieties of trees were likely to be suitable for this purpose. When I was in France in 1900 I visited a part of the coast of Normandy, which was formerly covered with drifting sands, very similar in character to these on Sable Island, where the French government have been doing a good deal in the way of tree-planting and have completely fixed these blowing sands by the planting of pines.

Information was obtained and a selection of trees made, and in May last I went to the island in company with the Deputy Minister of Marine and two other helpers, and we took with us from Halifax 81,000 trees, which had been imported from France, largely of the varieties used there for similar purposes.

By Mr. Wilson :

Q. Do they differ much from ours ?

A. The particular pine they use there mostly is called the *Pinus maritima* or Maritime pine. This is too tender to grow in this country, but on Sable Island, the climate, although very windy, is much milder than on the main land. Since meteorological observations have been taken there for some years past, the lowest point the temperature has fallen to is four above zero. We planted about 10,000 trees during the week spent on the island and left the remainder with the superintendent and his men, and he reports that they were all planted by the latter part of June. I have had three letters from the superintendent during the season, and although the conditions there have been very trying, winds are very difficult to contend with, the reports appear to indicate that we are likely to be fairly successful.

Q. What size were these trees ?

A. From 8 or 10 inches to 2 feet high ; the last report I had was November 5. The superintendent then reported a large proportion of the pines as living and promising.

There are no regular mail communications with the island, and it is only when the supply vessels go there that letters can be sent. It is an interesting experiment in forestry which is worthy of mention. It also serves to show that the information we have gained on this subject is found useful in many parts of the Dominion.

By Mr. Richardson :

Q. What is the location of Sable Island ?

A. It is off the Cape Breton shore, about 80 miles from Liscomb Harbour.