

AUSTRALIAN TIMBER AND TIMBER GETTING.

In a report by the Queensland Inspector of Forests, descriptive of a visit to New South Wales, that official gives some interesting particulars regarding operations in the gum forests. The system of working is that any person desirous of cutting gum must apply to the State Head Forester for a permit, for which he pays 10s per month, and may employ as many men as he may desire, giving to each a certificate that he is so employed. The State Head Forester allots a certain portion of the reserve on which the permit may be used, and as the timber is cut it is branded by the Crown at the stump, both log and stump being branded with white lead, each with a running number as well as with its length and circumference, a sub-forester entering every such number in his book for the State Head Forester's information. The timber is then removed to the river depot, and if left in the depot three months, royalty must then be paid thereon. For instance, timber removed to the depot in January would require to be paid for at the end of April, and if not removed after the royalty is paid the owners must still hold a permit costing 10s per month. No red gum is allowed to be cut under a circumference of 7ft. 6in. at 5ft. from the ground, but small

timber for piles, girders, &c., can be obtained at 15s up to a length of 30ft., but above such length 6d per running foot is charged.

For the purpose of assisting in the production of this timber a system of thinning-out and cleaning-up of the reserves is adopted, and about 25,000 acres have been dealt with, on the following lines:—Gangs of men, about 12 in each gang, are employed under an overseer at a wage of 7s per diem to the men, and 8s to the overseer, to ringbark any large and useless trees, and to thin out waste or crooked saplings, the latter being rooted out; and as this is done all fallen timber is gathered in heaps and burned, thus cleaning-up the reserve. This work costs from 6s to 10s per acre. The outlay may appear heavy, but it is most valuable for the following reasons:—

1. It prevents the destruction of numberless plants, saplings, and trees by fire, through the fallen timber making a far larger volume of fire than the grass alone would make.

2. The destruction by ringbarking of useless timber and the cleaning by fire is found to produce numberless young gum plants, and to greatly increase their growth.

3. As each tree or sapling fit for cutting as a pile is worth at least 15s, the cost of the work is not to be compared with the future benefit to the state therefrom.

4. The cleaning-up of the reserves, which are in many parts let at a rental of 3d per acre for grazing, tends toward obtaining a higher rental by the increase in production of gum for pastoral purposes.

5. The dead trees and logs being cleaned up enables the timber-getters to get more timber.

6. From examinations of portions of the reserves before and after thinning out and cleaning up, and from the healthier appearance of the young trees on the cleaned areas, in comparison with those uncleared, and which is considered is due to the trees obtaining a larger proportion of air, light, moisture, and growing space, it appears that the work will be reproductive and greatly assist to maintain an ample and permanent supply of mature timber.

NORWAY'S FOREST WEALTH.

The forest wealth of Norway is being rapidly diminished. An expert commission appointed by the Government made an alarming report showing that three million acres were cut down annually for every one that grew, in that climate it takes a hundred years for a pine to grow big enough to furnish a log twenty-five feet long and ten inches in diameter, which is the minimum available for the saw mills.

It was shown by the last census that the standing timber of the kingdom has been reduced to 68,179,940 cubic feet, or 21 per cent. of the entire area, whereas 55 per cent. of the country was covered with forest.

It is estimated that within the next half century the timber resources of Norway will be practically exhausted at the present rate of destruction.

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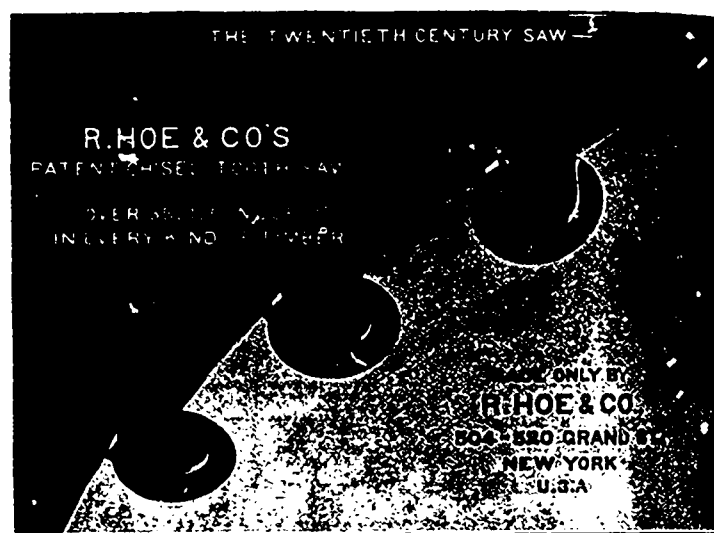
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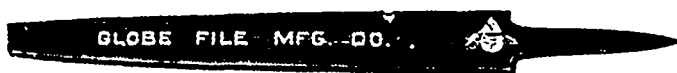
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