

passed the experimental stage. Some 293,000 trees have been planted by prison labour at Waiotapu, and steps have been taken to plant at Hanmer Plains in a similar manner.

Two new plantations have been started during the year: One at Ruatangata, not far from Whangarei, where the volcanic soil has induced the Chief Forester to extensively sow acorns of the cork-oak received from America, and also to plant trees raised from locally grown cork-oaks. The experiment is also being tried at this nursery of raising totara and puriri from slips, and trials are being made with seeds of the totara, matai, &c. Some twenty-five species of eucalyptus will also be tried at the same plantation. The other new plantation comprises 1,050 acres at Conical Hills, near Tapanui, where about 245,000 pits have already been dug in preparation for this season's trees.

With the consent of the owners, an area of 900 acres has been secured for forest planting on the Dumgree Run, close to the nursery at the Town of Seddon. The digging of the pits for receiving trees from the Starborough Nursery this season has been commenced.

At Hanmer Springs Plantations pits are being dug for forest trees and preparations are being made for sowing acorns.

On Somes Island, in Wellington Harbour, prison labour has been utilised, with very satisfactory results, in digging pits for planting. About eight to ten thousand pits have already been dug, and tree-planting is to be proceeded with.

The work being done in the various nurseries and plantations may be summarised as follows: Fifteen plantations, comprising 7,951 acres, upon which 167 men, 20 women, and 2 boys are employed during the busy season.

For full detailed information, reference should be made to the interesting and instructive annual report, tables, &c., by Mr. H. J. Matthews, Chief Forester, which appear in Appendix IV.

ASSISTANCE TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MEDICAL MEN IN OUTLYING DISTRICTS.

Particulars as to this will be found in the report of the Accountant, *vide* page xl.

SURVEYS.

The year 1902–3 was an eventful and busy one as regards the Survey branch of the Department. The normal strength of the staff was maintained till October, 1902, when several surveyors were engaged, and a great impetus was given to operations by orders received to increase the staff so as to open for settlement at the earliest possible date all available Crown lands.

Thirty-one additional surveyors were engaged, and the strength of the survey parties was increased, to enable the surveyors to put on extra parties under experienced foremen to overcome the difficulties and delays attending surveys in dense forest country. The surveyors were distributed as follows:—

NUMBER of SURVEYORS employed during the Year ending the 31st March, 1903.

District.	Staff Surveyors.		Contract Surveyors.	Total.
	Permanent.	Temporary.		
North Island.				
Auckland	9	20	32	105
Hawke's Bay	5	3	2	
Taranaki	5	7	1	
Wellington	8	12	1	
	27	42	36	
South Island.				
Marlborough	3	4	...	49
Nelson	6	6	5	
Westland	2	5	4	
Canterbury	2	1	...	
Otago	4	
Southland	2	2	3	
	19	18	12	
Totals	46	60	48	154*

* Including two Rangers occasionally employed.