

On the original block and the extension area eleven miles of fire-break 1 chain wide, a mile and a half  $\frac{1}{2}$  chain wide, and three miles 15 ft. wide was ploughed, and four miles 15 ft. wide was scuffled by hand.

Of the fire-breaks formed, one mile a chain in width was ploughed on the dividing-line between the plantation and the Tourist reserve. This reserve is thickly covered with manuka and dense undergrowth, and, as it is open to tourists and unprotected on the sides of the public roads, it will always be a menace to the plantation, as the reserve contains many thermal wonders and is largely visited by tourists. The natural growth of manuka and other native shrubs adds a beauty to the reserve which could scarcely be produced by artificial planting in a dozen years, and for this reason efforts should be made to protect the area from fire by erecting notice-boards relative to the danger of throwing down lighted matches, and further, by keeping the growth burnt off around the fence-line. Failing such precautions being taken, it will be necessary, for the safety of the plantation, to clear off all growth adjoining the plantations for a distance of at least 3 chains.

The internal fire-breaks are all formed along the roads which were laid off for carting trees and general purposes throughout the plantations, thus making them 1 chain wide with the additional width of the road, viz., 12 ft. Around the inside of the boundary-fences 15 ft. was ploughed, but in addition to this the growth between the fence and the public roads—where such exist—was kept burnt off. In many places on the fence-line the land is too steep to plough, and all that could be done to make the boundary fireproof was to keep down the growth—which is fortunately not thick—by hand. In country of this description, where fires are of frequent occurrence, all blocks of land reserved for tree-planting should be safeguarded from fire before any trees are planted. Next summer there will be about fifteen miles of fire-breaks to be gone over twice with the cultivator and harrows, and probably five miles of new fire-breaks to plough and form before the fire-breaks on the present enclosures are completed.

For the six summer months there is plenty of work to keep four horses constantly employed, and it will therefore be necessary to purchase two more horses before next spring, in order to form and maintain effective fire-breaks around and through the young plantations.

*Prison Labour.*—Notwithstanding that the work was a considerable distance from the camp, the value of work done by each man was £26 5s. 4d. more than that of the previous year. To account for this a number of reasons are apparent. Capes were supplied by this Department for each prisoner, and these enabled the men to go to and from their work without getting wet during showery weather. Much time was thus worked between the showers when otherwise the time would have been lost in camp. The class of prisoner, too, has been more suitable for these camps, and, with few unavoidable exceptions, none of the undesirable class have been sent from the town gaols. To the Prisons Department's officers much credit is due for the value of work performed. The officers have taken a live interest in the work, and assisted in every possible way by carrying out the various works as instructed. The prisoners who do the pruning and the replacing of deaths in the plantation often get very wet among the undergrowth and the branches after rain, and it is necessary that this should be remedied. A few suits of waterproof overalls would probably meet the case.

*Extension of Plantation.*—The survey-pegs were located on the Maungakakamea Reserve, and the lines for the fence cleared. The material for fencing the block is on order, and a start will shortly be made to erect the fence. It is intended to remove the prison camp to this reserve after the planting is finished next September. Preparations are well in hand for the planting of a million and a half trees during the coming winter. During the year 689 acres of land was cleared for tree-planting, and on this 2,228,562 pits prepared, of which 1,327,525 are available for the coming winter. It is proposed to plant a large block with larch without digging pits, as the small area planted in this manner two years ago has proved very successful.

A shed of some description is required for sheltering the implements, as exposure to the weather, combined with the sulphur in the atmosphere, soon causes the iron to corrode. A lean-to to the present stable would meet this requirement, and should be erected at the same time as the camp is shifted.

The following is a record of rainfall and temperature for the year :—

Month.	Rainfall.	Number of Days Rain fell.	Highest Reading of Ther- mometer.	Date.	Lowest Reading of Ther- mometer.	Date.
1906.	Inches.		Degrees.		Degrees.	
April ...	3.70	15	66	20th	23	23rd
May ...	5.74	14	64	29th	20	24th
June ...	2.43	7	64	19th	16	10th
July ...	7.24	21	63	26th	24	31st
August ...	3.51	10	64	25th	20	6th
September ...	5.76	8	66	24th	27	18th, 19th
October ...	1.89	7	...	...	...	...
November ...	4.25	12	79	22nd	30	11th
December ...	2.99	7	83	18th	36	16th
1907.						
January ...	10.14	14	85	21st, 24th	31	20th, 28th
February ...	6.97	12	83	12th	40	21st
March ...	3.60	10	78	1st	44	19th
Totals ...	58.22	137	...	...	...	...