

prisoners employed was 75·07, against 78·90 for the previous year. The average value of work done per man for the year is £79 17s. The Foresters in charge of tree-planting camps are unanimous in their reports as to the excellent work done by the prisoners, the majority of whom take a considerable interest in the various duties assigned them; and, from personal observation during several months of the past year whilst located at prison camps, I confirm this opinion, and assert that with few exceptions the prisoners are obedient, willing, industrious, and careful.

In order to enable well-behaved, industrious prisoners to make a fresh start in life on the expiry of their sentences, a special tree-planting camp has been commenced four miles from the Waiotapu Prison. Here discharged prisoners are offered remunerative employment either at contract rates or at day-wages, and during the few months this camp has been in operation the results have been entirely satisfactory.

A similar system might well be adopted near Hanmer Springs with beneficial results both to the State and to unfortunate men who are discharged from prison frequently without friends and without money.

The whole of the available area reserved for planting purposes at Hanmer Springs having been planted a new block of some 600 acres, situated two miles distant towards Jollie's Pass, was taken in hand. The prison huts and other movable structures were transferred to this site during February. A new cookhouse, mess-room, and store have been erected, an efficient supply of excellent water laid on, and special precautions taken in regard to drainage and other sanitary arrangements. The permanent buildings at the old camp have been altered and renovated for occupation by the Nurseryman in Charge. It is anticipated that sufficient land is available within easy distance of the new camp to keep forty prisoners employed for the next five years.

At Waiotapu arrangements are in progress for the removal of the prison camp to the centre of a new block of some 5,000 acres to the north-east of the present area. The site for the new camp (three miles distant from the old one) is in a most favourable position, with an excellent water-supply available, and every facility for good drainage. When this camp is completed and occupied, a great deal of time will be saved by the men in going to and from their work. It is proposed to plant this new area as far as possible in wedge-shaped blocks radiating from a common centre at the camp. The walking-distance to and from work will thus be evenly distributed for each year's planting.

#### CONVALESCENT CAMP.

In order to provide suitable employment for discharged patients from the sanatorium at Cambridge, it is proposed to establish a movable camp on the Whakarewarewa Plantation, some distance beyond the Waipa Prison Camp. This will to some extent overcome the difficulty with which the medical authorities are now faced in having to discharge convalescent patients who in many cases are compelled to resume their ordinary indoor occupation, thus lessening the possibilities of a complete restoration to health. It is not intended that each patient shall do a certain amount of work or plant a given number of trees, as payment will be made by results on the co-operative system. The State will thus be providing healthy employment for the needy without paying more for the work than it is at present costing by ordinary labour.

#### PROPOSALS FOR 1908-9.

*Puhipuhi Plantation*, North Auckland.—Preparations are in progress for the planting of approximately half a million trees, one-third *Podocarpus totara*, and the remainder eucalypti in various species.

*Whakarewarewa Plantation*.—It is expected to plant about two million trees here during the ensuing spring, chiefly larch, pines, redwood, Oregon pine, and eucalypti.

*Waiotapu Plantation*.—Some two and a half million trees have been set aside for this plantation, but the number that will be planted depends on the amount of prison labour available. Larch, redwood, and pines are the principal trees being dealt with. On the completed area of 2,000 acres it will be necessary to place a competent man in charge, to direct pruning operations and general maintenance.

*Dumgree Plantation*.—Owing to the decision to stop further work here, the available trees at Starborough Nursery—about 700,000—will be transferred to southern plantations. No further trees will be raised at Starborough, which is to be retained meantime as a station for growing horse-feed, &c., for use at the northern nurseries and plantations.

*Hanmer Springs Plantation*.—Pruning and general maintenance will be attended to on the old area, and about three-quarters of a million trees are expected to be planted on the new plantation, chiefly larch and pines.

*Waitaki Plantation*, near Kurow.—This plantation and the nursery at Kurow have been closed down, and all movable material distributed among other stations.

*Dusky Hill Plantation*.—It is expected to complete the planting of the burned area this year, when further work will be confined to general maintenance.

*Conical Hills Plantation*.—With the trees from Starborough Nursery it is expected to plant about one and a quarter million during the season. About 1,000 acres of planted area will require looking to in the way of pruning. Mr. N. Craig, recently occupying the position of Nurseryman in Charge at Kurow, has been transferred to this station as Forester in charge.

I have to express my thanks to the officers and employees generally for the satisfactory manner in which they have carried out their duties during a very trying season.