

growth with scarcely a death amongst them. There is no doubt that larch has proved one of the best trees planted out at this station; it is easily transplanted, and has done well in almost any soil and situation, the only thing affecting its growth being unseasonable frosts, of which, however, none have been experienced during the past year. *Pinus Laricio* has made fair growth, although a small number died during the drought, which commenced soon after they were planted. *Sequoia sempervirens* has been rather disappointing, having made little or no growth, but as the season was not very favourable it is hardly possible to judge as to its suitability until a further planting has been made. *Acacia melanoxylon* has, as usual, made splendid growth. Two species of eucalypti only were planted, *Eucalyptus Stuartiana* and *E. amygdalina*. Both have done well in the area planted first, but in the portion planted at the end of the season, when the weather was very dry, a considerable number of deaths have occurred. *E. amygdalina* has made less growth and has hardly stood the drought so well as *E. Stuartiana*, which will probably be found the more suitable species for this locality.

For the coming season preparations are in hand for planting about two million trees.

The work of this plantation is every year receding further from the Rotorua Township, and some difficulty has already been experienced in getting men for the work. The distance from Rotorua is about five miles, and the men have to use either horses or bicycles to get to and from work, the upkeep of which makes a serious inroad upon a daily wage of 7s. Accommodation in the shape of a building for cooking in and storing their food is recommended. This could be built on skids or in sections, and shifted about as required. Tents for the men to sleep in should also be provided, as is done at Waiotapu for the use of discharged prisoners.

A house is urgently required for the Assistant Forester, whose duties necessitate him being almost constantly on the reserve, and there is no house convenient to the plantation which could be rented or leased.

In January last, after a long spell of very dry weather, a fire unfortunately occurred, resulting in the destruction of three thousand eucalypti over an area of about 2½ acres. The trees were two years old, so that the loss, although deplorable, was not very great. As far as could be ascertained, the fire occurred owing to the soil igniting whilst the growth was being burnt off the adjoining fire-break some five days previously, and smouldering until it reached the fern-growth amongst the trees, when it blazed up and was noticed. It is very difficult to detect fire in the soil, as practically no smoke is emitted when it is dust-dry. In burning on the fire-breaks soil was thrown over the ashes and every precaution was taken by the officer in charge at the time to extinguish all fire, so that it was purely an accident.

The question of coping with fire at this plantation is one which should be gone thoroughly into at an early date. At present the boundary of the area planted with trees is, roughly, six miles, and practically only two miles and a half of this is constantly under observation, this portion being the boundary-line adjoining the nursery. Along the Wairoa and Waiotapu Roads, on both of which the traffic is considerable, a fire might occur and burn a large area of plantation before it was noticed. It is recommended that on each of these boundaries a reliable workman should be stationed, and his hut connected by telephone with the nursery, so that in the event of a fire he would perhaps be able to extinguish it before much damage was done, or, if necessary, get assistance in a short space of time. One of the fence-wires might be used for the telephone instead of erecting a separate line. Men stationed at such places could be profitably employed keeping the fences in repair, pruning, and attending to fire-breaks, &c.

It is proposed to start a camp shortly in the Waipa Valley, to offer employment at tree-planting to the convalescent patients from the Cambridge Sanatorium. A suitable spot has been selected by the Chief Health Officer, and six ex-patients will start work early in the year.

Details of expenditure are attached, and the species of trees planted during the year will be found by referring to Schedule 4 appended to Rotorua Nursery report.

<i>Expenditure.</i>				£	s.	d.
Amount at the 31st March, 1907	...	...	...	10,339	18	1
Pitting ...	...	...	...	767	4	2
Tree-planting ...	...	...	...	371	15	9
Clearing ...	...	...	...	703	6	9
Cartage of trees ...	...	...	...	98	0	0
General upkeep of plantation	...	...	...	528	3	11
" repairs ...	...	...	...	68	3	10
Horse-feed purchased and grown	...	...	...	100	7	0
Fencing ...	...	...	...	180	13	3
Tools, implements, &c. ...	...	...	...	64	14	10
Miscellaneous works ...	...	...	...	4	7	4
Salaries—						
Foresters—1 at £150, 1 at £75 1s. 5d. (6 months) ...	...	...	...	225	1	6
Supervision of prison labour ...	...	...	...	75	0	9
" free labour ...	...	...	...	150	1	6
Nurseryman's proportion of, and travelling-expenses ...	...	...	...	30	0	0
Clerical assistance (proportion of) ...	...	...	...	23	12	0
Supervision ...	...	...	...	36	5	0
				£13,541	13	5

D. J. BUCHANAN, Assistant Forester.
H. A. GOUDIE, Nurseryman in Charge.