

Summary of Trees growing on Numbered Blocks on Whakarewarewa Plantation.

Larch..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5,087,335
Pines ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,831,245
Blackwood	..	..	..	..	..	..	123,174
Eucalypti	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,986,142
Walnut	..	..	..	..	..	..	13,800
Douglas fir	..	..	..	..	..	..	148,758
Birch	..	..	..	..	..	..	6,585
Alder	..	..	..	..	..	..	25,993
Poplar	..	..	..	..	..	..	600
Redwood	..	..	..	..	..	..	90,673
Sycamore	..	..	..	..	..	..	32,536
Oriental plane	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,900
Norway spruce	..	..	..	..	..	..	195,025
Tide-land spruce	91,175
Red cedar	670
Sweet gum	1,700
White cedar	2,850
							9,640,161

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WAIOTAPU PLANTATION.

(Area, 7,695 acres ; approximate altitude, 1,200 ft.)

Trees to the number of 2,749,200 were received from Rotorua Nursery during the year, and of this number, 2,470,850 were planted on a new area, while the balance—278,350—were used to replace deaths in former years' planting. The trees were planted partly by free and partly by prison labour. Prisoners planted 2,146,325 on new area, and 102,250 to replace failures ; while the free labour planted 324,525 on new area, and 176,100 to replace failures. Since work commenced at this plantation, 16,153,740 trees have been planted ; 14,309,451 were used in planting new area, and the balance—1,790,690—represents those required from time to time to replace failures. An estimate of the actual number of trees now in the plantation is 13,926,254, and the area planted 5,423½ acres, details of which are contained in the schedules and summaries appended hereto. The results amongst the trees planted during the year are most satisfactory. Corsican pine, which composed the greatest part of the trees planted, have done especially well. With the larch the usual good results were obtained. Heavy pine has not succeeded as well as usual, owing to the planting being delayed well into the dormant season. This pine we have come to regard as the hardiest one we plant, so that the poor results can safely be attributed to the planting being done in mid-winter. All pines should be planted before the ground becomes too cold ; but it is sometimes impossible to do this, as there are usually a large number of trees to be handled, and the number of prisoners varies considerably. Most of the deaths replaced were in the previous year's planting of Corsican pine. The deaths in the larch were hardly appreciable, and even if deaths are replaced in these, they never catch up to the former year's planting, and are very liable to be destroyed by rabbits and hares, which are attracted by the newly disturbed soil.

The older portions of the plantation continue to make good progress, the principal labour expended on them being the maintenance of the fire-breaks and keeping the bracken-growth down where the trees are likely to be damaged by such growth. Where the trees are large and with interlacing branches, the fire-breaks are being sown down with grass and clovers. The parts treated last year in this manner have done fairly well. Hurdles were erected across them in several places, and sheep belonging to the Prisons Department kept the grass grazed, thus keeping down any growth that was likely to carry fire. So far, there is not a very large portion of the fire-breaks that can be treated in this manner, as many of the blocks of trees are still open enough to permit sheep to get in amongst them, and the only way in which a fireproof break can be maintained is by cultivating. During the year new fire-breaks formed amounted to 80 acres, being principally on the fence-boundaries adjoining public roads, and bracken- and fern-covered country owned either by the Natives or the Crown. This completes the fire-breaks, so far as the present enclosure is concerned, and the maintenance of these will entail a considerable amount of labour for about four years, or until such time as they can safely be sown down in grass and grazed.

Prison Labour.—The employment of prisoners continues to give satisfaction, the only fault being that we cannot get enough of them. To the officers of the Prisons Department much credit is due for the able manner in which they have assisted in carrying out the various works. Mr. Roberts, the Gaoler, who was in charge here for over three years, was transferred to Wellington Prison last June. During his service here he rendered great assistance to this Department by the cordial manner in which he co-operated with us for the common good of the Government at Waiotapu.

The value of the work done by the prisoners during the year was £2,390 7s. 1d., which averages £101 18s. 7d. for each of the 23·45 men employed.

A road is at present being formed through the land to be planted this year, and, when finished, every part of the plantation-area will be easily accessible with a buggy from the prison camp. For the coming planting season the prisoners have dug slightly over two million pits. There will be no difficulty in planting these, and if the numbers of prisoners were increased to the full capacity of the camp, four million trees could be planted, as the work is within easy walking-distance of the camp. This latter number would complete the present enclosure. Rabbits and hares have increased at a rapid rate in this district, owing perhaps to the shelter afforded by the growing trees, and it has been necessary to