

extended during the current year. The wet season has been responsible for an extraordinary heavy growth of bracken, and with the limited number of men available great difficulty has been experienced in keeping it down amongst the young trees. By free labour 72,600 pits were prepared at a cost of 9s. 6d. per thousand, and 52,560 trees were planted at a cost of 12s. 10d. per thousand. To enclose the new area planted by prison labour 166 chains of fencing was erected, in which a considerable quantity of material from the old boundary-fence was utilized, and about 250 *Eucalypti* posts out on the plantation were also used.

Prison Labour.—For the ten months during which prisoners were employed the daily average number of men was 12·33, and their earnings amounted to £1,001 0s. 3d., or an average per man of £81 3s. 8d. The work consisted of road-formation, clearing, pitting and planting new area, and general maintenance work. The men were transferred to Kaingaroa near the end of December, having then completed all available work within reach of the camp. All camp equipment and five huts were also shifted to Kaingaroa, and several huts, the property of the Prison Department, remain to be taken out when required. The main building, consisting of kitchen, storeroom, &c., will probably be converted into an officers' residence, and the remainder of the huts will be used for the accommodation of workmen.

It is gratifying to report that the sale of larch thinnings has been maintained steadily throughout the year, resulting in 393 cords of firewood, 6,045 poles, and 150 stakes, of a total value of £705 0s. 3d., being disposed of. Having an assured market, the work of classifying and stacking the timber was completed, and a sawing plant was purchased in order to supply the demand for firewood in lengths suitable for household purposes. With the present shortage of coal, and the high price of the usual lines of firewood, there is little doubt that the demand for larch will shortly increase, and as the stock in hand will probably be exhausted about the end of the winter it will be necessary, in order to maintain the present business, to resume thinning operations at an early date. It is also proposed to cut out a small area of *Eucalyptus coriacea* and work this entirely for firewood-production. A trial cutting of 1 acre on this area, which is fifteen years of age, yielded 260 fencing-posts, 240 mine-props, and 22 cords of firewood, or approximately 3,840 cubic feet of timber, which shows an approximate average annual increment of 256 cubic feet.

Rabbits and hares have done some damage amongst the trees planted during the past season, and were also responsible for about half the failures in the previous year's planting. Trapping and poisoning have been carried out as in former years, but as rabbits have been steadily increasing on the adjoining Native land during the past few years it is not possible to prevent a certain amount of destruction being done while the trees are small. Deer have also destroyed a small number of trees, chiefly on that part of the plantation adjoining the Okareka Game Reserve.

During the coming season the planting of the remaining small area of new ground will be completed. The total number of trees required will be about 60,000, inclusive of those to be used in replacing failures in the past season's planting.

Summary showing the Area of Whakarewarewa Plantation (7,954·3½ Acres in Trees).

How occupied.		Acres.
Larch	...	2,557·80
Pines	...	3,125·49
Blackwood (<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>)	...	79·00
<i>Eucalypti</i>	...	1,468·70
Walnut	...	9·70
Spruce, <i>Picea</i> , <i>Pseudo-tsuga</i>	...	643·31
Birch	...	5·80
Alder	...	8·94
Poplar	...	1·20
Chestnut	...	54·40
Roads, tracks, and fire-breaks	...	514·43
Land unsuitable for planting, including swamps, creeks, horse-paddocks, residence reserves, and water-main reserve	...	1,490·23
Unplanted land	...	164·80
Total	...	10,123·80

WAIOTAPU PLANTATION.

(Area, 7,777 acres; altitude, 1,200 ft. to 2,000 ft.)

(Assistant Forester, J. Mason.)

Afforestation operations have been carried out under almost perfect climatic conditions. The mild summer, assisted by frequent rains, produced a tree-growth which is probably unequalled in the history of the plantation; this is certainly the case in regard to the low-lying areas, where in former years late frosts continually cut back the more tender species. The only damage done was during September, when spring-like weather was followed by three weeks of heavy frost, and then the damage was confined to small areas of tussock country.

The whole of the enclosed area having been previously planted, all the trees received from the Rotorua Nursery, numbering 436,100, were used in replacing failures in former years' plantings. As there were no Corsican pine available during the previous season, the bulk of