

Generally the lined-out trees have made excellent progress. The *Pinus radiata* have, in fact, made too vigorous headway, and extreme care will require to be exercised in their subsequent lifting and planting. Owing to the dryness it was deemed undesirable to effect the usual checking by wrenching, as the adoption of this measure would undoubtedly have accounted for the death of these somewhat frail growers at this stage. The nurseries are well stocked, and we are in a position to send out about 2,500,000 trees this season of the type aimed at. Notwithstanding the increased rates of wages and working-expenses, the amount incurred during the year in the raising of trees—viz., £4,170 10s.—is slightly below the outlay of the previous season.

#### EXTENSION OF PLANTATIONS AND BRIEF ALLUSION TO TREE-GROWTH.

References have been made in a previous paragraph to the prime causes of our greatly reduced expansion-work. The original scheme outlined became impracticable for want of workmen, and it was only possible to operate with 1,357,353 trees, which have, however, by the introduction of the increased planting-distances, covered an area of 846½ acres. The total area now planted in the South Island reaches 9,833½ acres, over which some 24,000,000 trees were originally planted. Two important reservations for immediate afforestation were made—one at Balmoral, Canterbury, where 1,047 acres of shingly, manuka-clad land were partly fenced and subsequently used for the overflow planting from Hammer Springs, and the other at Greenvale, near Heriot, where an area of 5,169 acres has been set apart, 887 acres of which is now fenced, and preparations for the reception of 600,000 trees are being made. At each plantation the expenditure devoted to the construction of camps and rabbit-proof fences has greatly exceeded the outlay usually associated with such undertakings; but the abnormal prices prevailing account solely for these outstanding items of expenditure. It was necessary to provide accommodation for the foreman at Greenvale Plantation, and an inexpensive though serviceable four-roomed house is now in course of erection, which is being undertaken principally by our own labour. Ample provision for some years' planting in the Canterbury District has been made by the acquisition of approximately 6,589 acres of comparatively level scrub-clad land at Balmoral, adjoining the block now being operated upon. The railway-line from Christchurch to Culverden intersects this large tract of country, which, although providing sustenance for numerous rabbits, possesses little value from either a grain-producing or grazing point of view. There is no doubt in the possibility of being able to create a fine forest of commercially valuable timber on this waste land, although the preparation of ground for planting requires perhaps a slightly increased expenditure than is generally devoted to this phase.

Tree-growth is fairly uniform at each plantation, where the usual rate of progress is being maintained. At the older-established plantations the gradual replacement of the barkbound *Piceas* with fast-growing species of the *Pinus* genus is proceeding. A healthful appearance prevails throughout the various tree compartments, and an improvement in this respect is conspicuous with the larch, whose autumn foliage during the past two years is more typically golden.

#### TREES FOR FARMERS.

The increased publicity given to the "trees-for-farmers" scheme caused a greater demand for trees than was looked for. Consequently it was only possible to supply the requirements of some 165 applicants, who were supplied with 138,852 trees, valued at £250 4s. 5d., from the following nurseries: Tapanui, 100,818; Ranfurly, 24,320; Hammer Springs, 13,714. It is gratifying to be able to state that quite a number of planters have since notified me of their general success with the trees supplied, although in several cases the planting of the eucalypts was attended by partial failure. At an increased price, however, a limited number of gums will be available this season in boxes, and should reasonable care be exercised by the planter at least a 90-per-cent. growing percentage of these trees should eventuate. Again, the applications for *Pinus radiata* (Monterey pine) far exceeded those for all other varieties, and in supplying 63,130 we were scarcely able to fill half of the requirements. The position is different this year, however, and fully 200,000 Monterey pines have been specially reserved for the purpose. Amongst other varieties supplied were—*Pinus ponderosa*, 19,750; *P. Laricio*, 13,772; *P. muricata*, 12,900; *P. pinaster*, 1,175; poplars, 8,715; *Cupressus macrocarpa*, 3,070; eucalypts, 7,720. Both *C. macrocarpa* and poplars were over-requisitioned for, and this fact will influence the propagation of those trees in future. As might be expected, it has been necessary to revise the price-list, and the slightly increased charges for all varieties of trees will also cover the cost of supplying only specially selected first-grade stock.

#### EXPERIMENTAL PLANTATIONS.

Pronounced success has not been the outcome of certain phases of experimental work conducted in various parts of Otago Central, nor does this fact create surprise to persons conversant with the intensely unfavourable weather conditions prevailing this season, when meteorological statistics disclose the fact that only two or three very light showers fell from November to March, the period over which moisture is so essential for plant-development. For instance, such trees as Douglas fir, birch, &c., in the Tarras district, although well established and having attained the height of about 10 ft., succumbed to the intense aridity of the surface, whilst newly planted trees carefully attended to in cultivated ground also failed to survive the trying conditions.

At Sugarloaf Hill, near Lowburn Ferry, the preliminary work in connection with a scheme for alleviating the dust nuisance was embarked upon. Included in the proposition was the forming of a rabbit-proof enclosure and planting therein 4,195 trees of the following varieties: *Pinus ponderosa*, *P. Laricio*, *P. radiata*, *P. muricata*, *P. pinaster*, *P. austriaca*, *Populus fastigiata*, *P. deltoides*, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, and *Eucalyptus Macarthuri*. In addition the sand-deposits were judiciously covered with marram-grass, and depots of the same sand-binding agency running at right angles to the prevailing wind were created across the plateau, some 12,000 sets