

safety of State forests and plantations. As it would be futile to proclaim such areas within State forests alone, adjoining areas under any tenure have had to be included. Upon creation of a fire district, each landowner interested within the area is notified in writing of the closed seasons during which no fires may be lighted except with the written permit of, or the taking of precautions prescribed by, a Forest officer. The gradual extension of the system in districts of great fire hazard, will give the Service complete control over the fire danger, with a minimum patrol staff. One aspect of this question, which has been readily appreciated by the sawmillers and settlers affected, is that they are relieved of serious liabilities provided that they comply with the conditions laid down, also that the advantages of the system are not one-sided, as the safeguard afforded is mutual. Even outside fire districts, in many cases settlers intending to burn off land have taken to voluntarily notifying the local Forest officer. In Westland, the sawmillers spontaneously co-operated with the Service by detailing workmen to patrol the logging-tramways daily during the fire season. Calico fire-prevention notices have been posted up in the most frequented portions of the State forests and plantations, and in every case have been respected. The total expenditure on fire protection for indigenous forest was at the rate of 6d. per 100 acres.

Trespassers.

Twenty-six cases of trespass on State forest lands were reported, fourteen of which were for illegal timber-cutting and post-splitting, and twelve for stock trespass and vandalism. Several convictions were obtained under the Forests Act and State Forest Regulations, and also under the Animals Protection and Game Act, while a few cases of trespass on scenic reserves and national parks were reported to the Lands Department and Tourist Department respectively. The small number of cases reported reflects the growing moral sense of duty in the public mind to safeguard and respect national property.

Insect Damage.

With the assistance of the Department of Agriculture it has been possible during the year to secure some measure of control over a large number of the pests attacking eucalypts and other trees. In the plantations a Tortrix moth has caused a slight amount of damage. A more extensive control programme is planned for the coming year, as damage by decay fungi and timber insects is becoming more extensive. It has now been definitely established that imported timbers are bringing forest and timber pests into the Dominion, and investigations will probably show that for the protection of our forests and wood-supplies, inspection of all imported timber is an urgent necessity.

Wild Pigs and Goats.

These are numerous in some localities, and the goats cause great damage by browsing on undergrowth and young forest-trees, and by barking young trees. When the intensive management of indigenous forests is commenced, however, these animals will be easy to control.

4. AFFORESTATION AND FOREST-EXTENSION.

Despite the drastic reduction in capital moneys available, another year of splendid progress in the quantity of trees planted by the State and by non-State interests is recorded. In the State plantations nearly four million young trees (*Douglas fir*, *Pinus ponderosa* and *P. radiata*) were planted on 2,862 acres, at a labour cost of £1 18s per acre (45 per cent. less than last year).

Not only did the number of trees planted by the Service exceed the normal average, but the new method of notch planting has proved entirely successful in reducing formation costs and in enabling concentration of planting effort at the optimum planting-time. The State afforestation activities are now on a more efficient basis, and compare most favourably with any similar organization in the Empire.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS ON STATE PLANTATIONS DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1923.

Forest Plantation.	Number of Trees planted.	New Area planted.	Total Area planted in Trees, 1896-1923.
		Acres.	Acres.
Whakarewarewa*	.. .. .	..	8,037-00
Waiotapu*†	.. .. .	..	7,010-00
Kaingaroa Plantation†	3,264,275	2,539	14,976-00
Puhipuhi	.. .. .	..	1,200-00
Conical Hills	.. .. .	..	3,533-50
Pukerau	.. .. .	..	565-50
Dusky Hill	.. .. .	..	745-75
Greenvale	395,125	307	1,710-75
Gimmerburn	.. .. .	..	88-00
Naseby	46,300	12	2,150-75
Hanmer Springs	6,425	1	2,913-50
Balmoral	71,905	3	1,256-50
Raincliff	.. .. .	..	206-00
Experimental group	.. .. .	..	253-00
Totals	3,784,030	2,862	44,646-25

* Discrepancies with areas shown in previous reports were discovered during a survey made in 1922-23.

† Kaingaroa West and Kaingaroa Plains Plantations have been amalgamated as "Kaingaroa Plantation," and a portion of the Waiotapu Plantation has now been included in Kaingaroa Plantation.