

machine," which is revolved sufficiently to shake out any remaining seeds. These appliances have proved very satisfactory and cheap. Since commencing operations in September, 1923, some 400 lb. of pine-seed have been extracted and cleaned at a labour-cost of 1s. per pound.

#### SALE OF TREES AND SEEDS.

The satisfactory increase in business noted for the 1921-22 season was maintained during the one just passed. An advance in the number of orders received of 25 per cent. and of 33 per cent. in the total of trees sold must be considered satisfactory. In two districts (North Auckland and Taranaki-Wanganui) orders increased 100 per cent., despite the fact that freight to these localities is very heavy and had to be paid by consignees. An analysis of the sales shows that conifers to the number of 1,029,929 were sold. Eucalypts sold amounted to 369,405.

Replies to a circular sent out to last year's customers regarding the stock supplied to them indicate that the average loss in planting was surprisingly low. A large number of reports show about a 5-per-cent. death-rate, and very few indeed exceed 10 per cent. The information received by correspondence with customers has been exceedingly valuable to the Department, especially in regard to the suitability of the stock sold in certain districts. Appended are particulars of business done :—

	<i>Trees sold.</i>	1923.	1922.
To farmers and others .. .. .	.. .. .	838,755	801,398
Public bodies .. .. .	.. .. .	363,575	184,130
Other Departments .. .. .	.. .. .	103,276	20,033
Soldier settlers .. .. .	.. .. .	88,517	..
Schools and colleges .. .. .	.. .. .	5,211	9,603
		<u>1,399,334</u>	<u>1,015,164</u>
Total number of orders .. .. .	.. .. .	1,245	1,016

Arrangements have been made to handle approximately two million trees during the coming season, and the orders already booked indicate that this quantity will be disposed of if not exceeded.

#### *Seed sold.*

The amount of tree-seed sold totalled 577 lb.

#### REVENUE.

Following are particulars of revenue from nursery and plantations received during the last two years :—

	1923-24.	1922-23.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Sale of trees .. .. .	4,074 12 9	3,121 7 7
Sales of tree-seeds .. .. .	546 1 6	574 16 2
Sales of firewood .. .. .	47 13 11	2 0 0
Sales of posts, &c. .. .. .	72 10 11	..
Grazing .. .. .	222 13 10	207 15 9
Rental of departmental cottages .. .. .	334 16 3	374 8 9
Inspections and reports .. .. .	51 19 6	..
Sundries .. .. .	184 12 9	130 11 4
	<u>£5,535 1 5</u>	<u>£4,410 19 7</u>

#### FIRE PROTECTION.

The protective system now in operation proved very satisfactory, and although extremely dry weather was experienced from November to the end of January no damage was done by fire. During the height of the tourist season extra patrolmen were employed. Since the creation of the fire districts the danger of fire from outside spreading into the plantations has been considerably reduced, and the landowners within the districts have complied with provisions in a most commendable manner. For the convenience of picnic-parties and fishermen fireplaces were formed near the Blue and Green Lakes, and have been freely used. Protective measures, including lookout patrol and firebreaks, cost on an average 3s. 2d. per acre over the 35,638 acres planted in the Rotorua conservation region.

#### THINNING PLANTATIONS.

*Whakarewarewa Plantation.*—A permit was granted to a firewood-merchant of Rotorua to cut posts, firewood, &c., over an area of 80 acres of twenty-three-year-old *Pinus austriaca* and 40 acres of *Eucalyptus Risdoni*. To date the areas treated show the following returns : 10 acres *Pinus austriaca*—146½ cords firewood ; 4,119 mine-props, poles, &c. 14 acres *E. Risdoni*—115½ cords firewood ; 3,256 mine-props, &c.

*Waiotapu Plantation.*—The thinning of a block of twenty-year-old *Pinus insignis* was undertaken during the year. This area was originally planted with 2,722 trees to the acre, and the thinning has reduced these to 607. The return in firewood from the 8 acres completed amounted to 50 cords per acre, at a cost of 13s. 6d. per cord.