

3. AFFORESTATION OPERATIONS IN GENERAL.

The year's planting objective of 47,000 acres set last year was exceeded by approximately 9,000 acres due to the fact that the Department was again called upon to increase its programme very considerably in order to provide employment for many who could find no other means of livelihood for several months of the year. That the Service was able to respond to the call and rearrange its plans so as to find work for approximately 1,800 men at very short notice and accommodate them in the field for nearly five months, speaks well for its organization and for the willing team-work and loyal co-operation of all members of the Staff.

The total area planted was 56,630 acres (including 30 acres of direct formation), which brings the aggregate area of State softwood plantations (in round figures) to 253,600 acres; and constitutes the largest area of State-owned and State-planted forests in any single State in the Empire.

Full statistics with respect to the year's plantation activities, &c., will be found in Appendix II of this report.

TABLE 3.
AREAS PLANTED TO DATE AND AREAS AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE PLANTING, ETC.

Region.	Plantation.	Area planted.*	Balance available for Planting, including Firebreaks.	Approximate Planting Programme, 1930.
		Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Auckland	Riverhead	8,878	1,646	1,646
	Maramarua	5,840	6,740	6,126
	Tairua .. ..	..	52,000	1,500
	Minor areas	1,083	650	100
Rotorua	Whakarewarewa	7,591	82	..
	Waiotapu	7,920	166	..
	Kaingaroa	145,963	93,280	30,000
Wellington	Karioi	9,471	6,650	2,737
	Minor areas	671	4,938	100
Nelson	Golden Downs	5,556	6,540	3,500
	Minor areas	347	..	..
Westland	Westland	1,688	6,072	..
Canterbury	Hanmer Springs	7,680	197	197
	Balmoral	18,671	2,007	1,906
	Eyrewell	12,008	4,134	3,758
	Minor areas	220	22	22
Southland	Blue Mountains	8,713	..	..
	Naseby	2,580	1,163	1,047
	Greenvale, Dusky and Conical Hills	8,017	56	..
	Minor areas	706	..	..
	New scheme .. ..	..	6,866	2,000
	Totals	253,603	193,127	54,629

* Includes 7,078 acres direct-seeded.

As it was realized that an accelerated planting-programme would result in all the land available at Riverhead and Maramarua Plantations, Auckland Region, being planted up before the close of the year 1930-31 and as the area thus established would be insufficient to supply the future requirements of the rapidly expanding Auckland Province, steps were taken to acquire further land for afforestation activity; this has resulted in the selection of Tairua project which comprises an area of approximately 52,000 acres of State and provisional State forest land lying along the east coast in Thames and Ohinemuri Counties on the eastern side of Coromandel Peninsula. An inspection of this block by the Auckland Advisory Committee set up in terms of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1929, confirmed the departmental opinion that the great bulk of the land could be more economically utilized for tree-planting than for farming purposes, and action will be taken to that end. The better-quality areas will be demarcated in due course and handed over to the Lands Department for settlement purposes. On certain occasions the Service has been subjected to criticism for allegedly afforesting lands which could more profitably be used for farming, and it must be admitted that plantation units of 10,000 acres or upwards in the Dominion must sometimes include within their boundaries some small areas of farming value. Wherever possible, however, such lands are excluded, the securing of boundaries which will minimize fire danger to the growing trees, being, of course, the deciding factor.

A new field nursery has been established at Tairua and it is anticipated that sufficient young stock will be available to plant an area of 1,500 acres during the coming winter and to provide, in addition, five or six million seedlings for lining out in the nursery for the following year's requirements.