

REPORT.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR easy reference a few of the major activities are summarized hereunder :—

Afforestation.—Afforestation operations for the year resulted in the establishment of a gross area of 53,752 acres of new plantations, or 248 acres less than the projected programme of 54,000 acres. In round figures, the total area of exotic plantations is now 307,000 acres.

Thinning, &c.—The thinning and clearing of the older-age plantation classes, which was undertaken on an extended scale for the first time last year, were continued, and at Conical Hills (Otago) the major portion of the plantation has now been thinned. Cleaning and underscrubbing were also carried out in the older plantations of Rotorua and Canterbury Regions respectively, and it is hoped that it may be possible to extend this silvicultural treatment, so essential to the health and maximum growth of the plantations, to cover all the older-age classes not yet dealt with.

Utilization.—At the present time consideration is being given, by the preparation of working plans, to the possibility of commercially utilizing thinnings from plantations. It is hoped that a demonstration can be made of the possibility of converting these thinnings into shooks for fruit-cases and cheese-crates, &c., which will successfully compete with the imported article, and so use this hitherto-wasted product of growing plantations, and also devise a method of utilization which will ensure a higher conversion factor, a lower cost of production, and a shook at least as good in quality and appearance as the foreign product.

Forest Wild Life.—Wild animals inimical to plant and forest growth are still very numerous, and their reduction to a safe margin is a matter of grave concern ; otherwise regeneration, especially in the southern-beech forests, will soon be non-existent.

As stated in Chapter I of this report, forest pests, under all heads, destroyed by the Service totalled 64,032, and the Service has official cognizance of a further 12,267 deer destroyed by private agencies, making a grand total of 76,299.

In this connection it may be mentioned that wild-life control will henceforth be administered entirely in terms of the Animals Protection and Game Act, 1921–22.

RETIREMENT OF DIRECTOR.

At the 31st March, 1931, Mr. E. Phillips Turner, F.R.G.S., relinquished the position of Director of Forestry, which he had held for the past three years.

Mr. Turner has been a life-long student of forestry and its cognate subjects generally, and New Zealand forests in particular, and during his long service with the State as land-surveyor, first Dominion Inspector of Scenic Reserves, and as Chief Forestry Officer (prior to the establishment of Forestry as a separate Department) he acquired an intimate field knowledge of our indigenous forest-life, both North and South, which has been rarely equalled and probably never surpassed.

A natural corollary to the setting-up of the new Department in 1920 was Mr. Turner's appointment as head of the Administrative Branch, and in 1928—eight years later—he succeeded Mr. L. MacIntosh Ellis as Director. Forestry sustains a severe loss by the retirement of Mr. Turner, but to Forest officers this loss is tempered by reason of the fact that his ripe experience and specialized knowledge will be available to the Department from time to time, as the Government has been pleased to accept his offer to act as Honorary Forest Adviser.

CHAPTER I.—THE STATE FORESTS.

1. AREAS OF STATE FORESTS AS AT 31ST MARCH, 1931.

Region.	State Forests.		Provisional State Forests.		Totals.	Percentage of Total Area in Region under Reservation.
	Ordinary.	National Endow- ment.	Ordinary.	National Endowment.		
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	
Auckland ..	159,545	22,516	260,527	72,443	515,031	5·99
Rotorua ..	300,314	59,528	156,863	209,098	725,803	14·43
Wellington ..	799,070	..	161,603	73,784	1,034,457	6·91
Nelson ..	158,751	12,086	1,338,625	726,103	2,235,565	31·80
Westland ..	2,309	..	1,086,354	597,665	1,686,328	43·65
Canterbury ..	328,826	3,699	332,525	3·35
Southland ..	280,193	..	884,230	67,034	1,231,457	7·25
Totals ..	2,029,008	97,829	3,888,202	1,746,127	7,761,166	11·69

The area dedicated to forestry purposes now stands at 7,761,166 acres, a slight increase over last year's figures, and 11·69 per cent. of the total area of the Dominion.