

## GROWTH RATE OF NATIVE TREES UNDER CULTIVATION *(By L. W. McCaskill.)*

ONE of the complaints made against the use of native trees for planting for purposes of ornament, conservation or timber is their alleged slow rate of growth as compared with exotics. Although there is plenty of experience to the contrary there do not seem to be available many actual growth records of trees of known age. It is fortunate that we have in Canterbury such an enthusiast as Mr. J. M. Baxter of the Tawhai Nursery and Native Reserve on the slopes of Mt. Pleasant, near Christchurch. Mr. Baxter has spent several years in a labour of love—the changing of a dry grassy hillside into an area of artificial native bush, nearly three acres in extent. The result is what must be one of the finest collections of native trees and shrubs in existence. Of particular interest is the fact that the owner has personally grown from seed, cuttings, or wild plants, every plant in the

collection except those necessarily imported from the North Island. Further than that, he himself planted every tree and shrub, with the result that accurate information is available as to the age and soil treatment of almost every plant in the collection.

The first trees were planted some thirteen years ago in holes prepared in the grass covering on the hillside. With subsequent plantings greater attention was paid to prior cultivation with results obvious from a study of the tables. In February, in company with Mr. Baxter, I made measurements of the height and circumference at ground level of representative specimens of trees and shrubs, together with the date of planting and the soil treatment prior to planting. Most of the plants would be two to three years old at planting and were planted out of pots or as balled plants from nursery

General view of Mr. Baxter's Native plantation.

