

Ground was prepared, and 21,950 acorns planted *in situ* where vacancies occurred, at a cost of 14s. 7½d. per thousand.

An expenditure of £230 0s. 2d. was incurred in general maintenance. This item includes clearing fern from around young trees, pruning, ploughing roads and firebreaks, and making drains.

About 16 chains of track were formed—costing 4s. per chain—to give access to various parts of the plantation.

A considerable amount of time was spent in removing manuka scrub, which has grown strongly since last cutting. This work is necessary, as the scrub in being blown about by the wind comes in contact with the leaders of trees growing within reach, and causes direct injury to the same.

Cutting Canadian thistle and ragwort also provided a fair amount of labour during seeding-time, but as the trees make headway the spreading of noxious weeds will be gradually suppressed.

The average height of trees planted during the first year's operations on this plantation is about 13 ft., and through the absence of sunshine, caused by branches of trees forming a canopy overhead, undergrowing vegetation is fast becoming extinct.

The expenditure for the year amounted to £487 6s., giving employment to an average of four men.

Details of expenditure and values are appended.

F. BENFELL, Assistant Forester.

R. G. ROBINSON, Nurseryman in Charge.

CONICAL HILLS PLANTATION.

(Area, 1,050 acres; altitude, 400 ft.)

Notwithstanding the absence of warm forcing weather, a very favourable growth has been made by trees planted throughout, and pines may be specially mentioned in this respect.

Trees to the number of 623,000 (as per Schedule B³) were planted, occupying an area of 228½ acres, and the preparation of ground for the planting of 239,600 acorns was carried on by day-labour, at a cost of 14s. 3½d. per thousand.

The area for the year's planting amounted to 278½ acres, making a total of 664½ acres, containing 2,074,171 trees.

Pits to the number of 464,070 for tree-planting were made by contract, at £1 5s. per thousand, this cost being increased to £1 6s. 8½d. by inclusion of Forester's salary. 98,689 grubber-pits were also prepared by contract, at £1 per thousand; actual cost, £1 1s. 6½d.

Road-formation was continued, about 147 chains being ploughed and partly formed in readiness for the coming season's delivery of trees.

One hundred and thirty-seven chains of additional firebreaks were ploughed outside boundary-fence to minimise the risk of fires from adjoining properties.

Pinus radiata, to the number of 6,075, were planted on ridges as breakwinds. Although many of the trees were rather large for transferring to such exposed places, only a small percentage failed to succeed.

General maintenance: A large amount of work is now necessary in clearing fern and other growth from young trees, and it has been specially noticed that this work is accomplished with more satisfactory results if carried out before spring-time, as a very decided check to growth is noticeable when removal of immediate shelter is undertaken whilst the young trees are making their annual growth. Pruning, cutting gorse and manuka scrub, and the removal of noxious weeds, and rabbiting were also carried on.

It is anticipated that the whole of the ground available for pitting on this plantation will be completed before the expiration of another season, and in view of this fact an additional area of about 1,600 acres adjoining the plantation has been recently acquired for forestry purposes, and fencing and pitting operations will be carried on in this extension during the ensuing year.

For the next season about 900,000 trees and acorns will be available for planting.

The expenditure for the year amounted to £1,872 16s. 11d., providing work for an average of seventeen men.

Details of expenditure and values are appended.

H. HOWE, Forester.

R. G. ROBINSON, Nurseryman in Charge.

WAITAHUNA PLANTATION, OTAGO.

(Dredged area, 11 acres; altitude, 331 ft.)

To test the suitability of old dredged areas for forest-tree planting, an area of 11 acres immediately adjoining the township, on the southern side, has been selected for the purpose, and operations were commenced early in February last.

Forty-three chains of wire-netting fence were erected by day-labour, at 4s. 6d. per chain, and included in this cost is extra labour in levelling off to some extent the fence-line, where tailing deposits have naturally created an uneven surface.

As may be expected, these dredged areas when lying idle are easily and speedily converted into prolific gorse wastes by the seed being conveyed by floods, or else blown from hedges in the vicinity and deposited there, where germination readily follows.

An expenditure of £25 is necessary to clear the enclosure of this scrub before pitting for tree-planting can be proceeded with.

It would be to the interest of the Government and landholders generally if lessees of dredging-claims were required to keep noxious-weed growth in check during the currency of their lease, as