

46. *Forest (Fire-prevention) Regulations 1940 (Serial Number 1940/246), as amended (Serial Number 1943/31).*—No amendment to these regulations was made or found necessary during the year.

One of the principal means of keeping the provisions of the regulations under the notice of operators and workers in State forests and in fire districts is their distribution in poster form for display in sawmills, where they can be conveniently read by workers and visitors. Early in the fire season arrangements were also made for a leaflet to be placed in each worker's pay envelope directing attention to his responsibilities under the regulations. Many posters were renewed during the year.

The early confusion concerning the obligations imposed by the regulations has now almost entirely disappeared, and the majority of operators are ready and willing to co-operate with forest officers in enforcing their observance.

During the period of high fire hazard in February and March the prohibition (*Gazette*, 1944, page 89) of the use of gas producers on the Dargaville–Opononi Road through Waipoua Forest in North Auckland and on the Rotorua–Waikaremoana Road through Waioapu and Kaingaroa Forests was undoubtedly of the greatest value in preventing the small roadside fires which inevitably follow the use of gas-producers.

For the first time since the regulations came into force it was necessary to exercise the authority conferred by Regulation 7, which provides that, when weather conditions arise which in the opinion of the Director of Forestry present an extreme fire hazard whereby life and property may be endangered by spreading forest fires, the Director may issue or cause to be issued either by radio or otherwise an order suspending, for the period and in the localities designated in such order, any logging, sawmilling, or other operations specified in such order. An order under this regulation was issued on the 19th February, 1946, and was advertised in local newspapers and broadcast by radio on that day and the following day, suspending the lighting of fires and the use of any steam log-hauler or other steam-engine whatsoever associated with forest logging operations in the locality comprising Tauranga, Matamata, Rotorua, Whakatane, and Taupo Counties. The restriction created by the order was removed from individual operations as the fire danger passed. This particular experience demonstrated that even sawmillers and honorary forest rangers in charge of fire districts are in need of education as to their responsibilities under forest-fire-protection legislation. As an instance, an aerial patrol after the issue of the order actually found a sawmill operating a slab fire within a few hundred yards of one of the largest exotic forests in the area, and fire-fighters and patrolmen constantly passing it by.

47. *Animal Damage.*—Damage is still being done by deer, pigs, goats, horses, hares, and opossums in exotic and indigenous forests in spite of the large number of animals destroyed. Pigs are injuring tree roots at Kaingaroa, with a marked dietary preference for Corsican-pine roots, and the usual minor damage is being caused by wild horses browsing on young shoots. Hares are becoming a nuisance in the newly regenerated areas at Whakarewarewa by eating off young leaders. Both deer and goats are reported to be destroying undergrowth in the indigenous forests in the high country on the west coast. Opossums are now rated as the most serious of exotic forest pests by South-land forest officers.

48. *Animals destroyed.*—The numbers of animals reported killed in State forests during the year are: rabbits and hares, 30,500 (17,500); deer, all species, 923 (1,680); pigs, 1,367 (3,400); goats, 266 (187); opossums, 15,528 (3,226); other animals, including cats, weasels, stoats, 1,658.

49. *Insect Damage.*—No serious outbreaks of insect pests have been reported during the past year. The usual seasonal occurrences of *Navomorpha*, *Hylastes*, *Sirex*, *Pachycotes*, and *Platypus* spp. have been observed in all conservancies. *Eucolaspis* caused slight damage to insignis pine and spreading-leaved pine in Whakarewarewa Forest in November–December by defoliating young stock.

Shipments of hardwood timber have been inspected at ports of discharge by officers of the State Forest Service and the State Advances Corporation. In only one instance has any termite-infested or other insect-infested timber imported from Australia been