

Digging "pits" for planting permanent trees at plantations cost 14s. 6d. at Whakarewarewa, £1 10s. at Dusky Hill, £1 5s. at Survey Paddock, and 15s. at Kaingaroa, per thousand, all being dug by contract. At the Waiotapu Plantation (worked entirely by prison labour) from three hundred to five hundred pits were dug per day per man—depending on the class of land dealt with, as well as the man.

The lowest readings of thermometer were: At Eweburn, 9°, or 23° of frost; at Tapanui, 16°, or 16° of frost; at Starborough, 28°, or 4° of frost; at Whakarewarewa, 26°, or 6° of frost; and at Waiotapu, 18°, or 14° of frost. The maximum temperatures recorded were: Eweburn, 86°; Tapanui, 94°; Starborough, 94°; Whakarewarewa, 89°; and Waiotapu, 92°.

Rainfall for the year amounted to 17·04 in. on 82 days at Eweburn, 36·09 in. on 144 days at Tapanui, 19·97 in. on 80 days at Starborough, 44·17 in. on 115 days at Whakarewarewa, and 47·44 in. on 132 days at Waiotapu.

The maintenance and improvements to various thermal-springs reserves and sanatoria having been taken over from this Department by the Tourist Department on the 1st September, the usual report on work done in connection therewith is consequently omitted from this year's statement. The planting of street trees in the Town of Rotorua by this Department has also ceased, the newly constituted Town Council now having control of this work.

The proposal to establish a forest-tree nursery in the Wellington District is under consideration, and it is hoped to make a beginning at an early date.

The experiment of utilising prison labour for tree-planting in the Waiotapu Valley has so far been a pronounced success. A good class of men have been employed—men who apparently take considerable interest in the work. During next year other plantations and possibly a new nursery will be established by prison labour, the matter being at present under consideration.

In accordance with the instructions of the Surveyor-General a comprehensive scheme for forest-conservation and extensive planting operations is now being prepared. Suggestions will also be submitted for the better protection of State forests, climatic reserves, scenic reserves, and forest-clad Crown lands. Owing to the rapid denudation of our native forests it is necessary that measures be at once taken to conserve and protect our timber and make provision for the future.

The question of supplying settlers in various parts of the colony with shelter and forest trees from State nurseries (either free of cost or at usual trade prices) requires careful consideration. A number of applications have been received for supplies, but these have so far been declined, on the grounds that the Government do not wish to interfere with private enterprise so long as nurserymen continue to supply the public with well-grown nursery stock at reasonable rates.

Detailed reports on the various nurseries and plantations are appended, as are also particulars of all trees growing in nurseries and permanently planted in plantations, with their actual cost and present value. Expenditures and financial results of operations from September, 1896, to date are also given.

EWEBURN NURSERY, OTAGO.

Owing to heavy gales and meagre rainfall the growth of nursery stock is not as good as in past years. From April to November only 4·18 in. of rain fell, and from December to March 12·86 in. was recorded. The spring was therefore exceedingly dry when transplanting was in progress, and, as little rain fell until the end of December, no growth took place until January.

The lowest temperature recorded was 9°, or 23° of frost, and the highest 86° on 13th January and 3rd February. *Pinus ponderosa*, *P. Benthamiana*, and *Abies douglasii* have suffered most from drought and heavy winds.

The shelter plantations around nursery have succeeded well, and now afford fair protection to the lining-out ground.

Amongst this year's seedling trees, larch and *Abies douglasii* germinated poorly owing to want of heat; pines, however, did fairly well, considering the adverse season.

Trees to the number of 134,950 were sent to the plantation near Naseby for permanent planting during the year.

Sufficient horse-feed—oats, clover-hay, and carrots—were grown for our requirements, and the turf of clover was ploughed in as green manure preparatory to lining out trees during the coming spring.

Extra seed-frames (fifty-four) were made for the growing of a hundred thousand more forest trees annually.

Details of expenditure, values, trees in stock, &c., will be found in attached schedules.

The following is the rainfall:—

Record of Rainfall and Temperature at Eweburn Nursery.

Month.	Rainfall.	Number of Days Rain fell.	Highest Reading of Thermometer.	Date.	Lowest Reading of Thermometer.	Date.
1901.	Inches.		Degrees.		Degrees.	
April ...	0·55	3	77	6th and 7th	19	19th
May ...	1·13	7	62	15th	18	7th and 13th
June ...	0·05	1	58	2nd	14	10th and 13th
July ...	0·05	1	45	8th and 9th	9	1st and 3rd
August ...	0·38	6	59	13th	15	8th
September ...	0·54	4	67	21st and 24th	21	6th
October ...	0·47	6	74	28th	22	8th
November ...	1·41	7	77	11th and 25th	24	7th
December ...	4·53	17	76	27th	34	23rd and 25th
1902.						
January ...	2·60	9	86	13th	32	29th
February ...	1·62	9	86	3rd	36	19th
March ...	3·71	12	75	4th	26	18th
Totals ...	17·04	82				