

CONICAL HILLS PLANTATION, OTAGO.  
(Area, 1,050 acres.)

THIS property was set apart for forestry purposes in January last, when possession was taken and works commenced. It is situated within a few chains of Conical Hills Siding, and some ten miles distant from Tapanui Nursery, by a good metalled road. The land is chiefly undulating, and cut up by deep sheltered valleys. The soil is varied in character and rather poor, but suitable for the growth of a wide range of forest trees. A very small proportion of fencing will be required, as the Pomahaka River skirts three-fourths of the boundary, which is half-circular in outline. The property includes a cottage and outbuildings, which are being used by the Forester in Charge.

Clearing gorse and scrub on the river-banks has been the principal work undertaken so far, and preparations are being made for the erection of the necessary fencing, forming of roads, culverts, &c., as well as clearing land in readiness for pitting. It is anticipated that about 300,000 trees (chiefly ash and spruce fir) will be planted here during the coming season.

The expenditure amounts to £44 8s.

HARRY HOWE, Forester.

R. G. ROBINSON, Nurseryman in Charge.

RAINCLIFF PLANTATION.

(Area, 206½ acres.)

THE gorse which was growing amongst the trees has been thoroughly grubbed out and burnt, all double leaders and strong side branches removed from trees, and 68 chains of new fencing erected.

The majority of the trees have made good growth during the year, more especially larch, *Pinus ponderosa*, and *Abies-Douglasii*.

As mentioned in last year's report, this plantation is leased for grazing purposes (sheep only), and the young growth of gorse has been successfully kept down by this means. The rental received for grazing was £11 4s.

No work is contemplated during the coming year.

Statement of expenditure and values is appended.

DAVID BUCHANAN, Assistant Forester.

HANMER SPRINGS PLANTATION.

(Area, 600 acres, approximate.)

TREES to the number of 6,900 were permanently planted here last spring, with good results. Of the above, 3,900 English birch were planted along the northern and western boundaries of plantation for shelter purposes. Ninety thousand five hundred acorns were also planted *in situ* on the banks of Dog Creek, at a cost of 4s. 10½d. per thousand, where pitting would be impracticable. These have germinated and grown exceedingly well, a careful examination showing rather less than 3 per cent. of failures.

The area covered by this year's planting is 28½ acres. 64,206 pits have been completed, at a cost of £1 12s. 4½d. per thousand.

Fifty-four chains of draining has been done, and two fire-breaks, each 60 chains long by 1½ chains wide, have been cleared of scrub and flax. A considerable area of land has also been cleared for pitting.

The erection of a boundary-fence was completed last June in a very satisfactory manner, and three gates placed to give entrance to various parts of the reserve.

A galvanised-iron tool-house has also been erected.

A temporary nursery, about 2 acres in area, was enclosed by a wire-netting fence, and cultivated during last spring. 186,250 two-year-old trees sent from Tapanui Nursery were lined out, at a cost of 6s. 2d. per thousand.

All nursery stock has made good growth during the year, and 211,450 two-and three-year-old trees are now in readiness for transference to plantation during the coming season. One hundred and fifty thousand acorns will also be planted in pits already prepared for same.

An average of four persons was employed during the year.

The expenditure for year amounts to £528 19s. 10d., and the total expenditure to date is £1,180 13s. 11d.

MANUEL P. STARK,  
Assistant Forester.

STARBOROUGH NURSERY.

RAIN fell on eighty-five days during the year, with a total rainfall of 21.13 in. Maximum temperature registered, 94°; minimum, 30°.

Seedling trees are a very good crop indeed, on the thin side, but that is all in their favour, seeing that the bulk have to stand two years in the seed-beds. Owing to the changeable and unsettled weather experienced in spring and early summer, seeds germinated slowly, and from the experience of the last two years from the middle to the end of October is quite soon enough to begin sowing.

*Eucalypti*.—To test this very valuable timber tree, and ascertain the kinds best suited to this district, a collection of thirty-eight varieties was sown. It is purposed to plant a number of each kind on a specially selected site, thus a year or two hence definite information will be at the disposal of the Department.

*Robinia pseudo-acacia*.—This tree in its young state grows very fast here, the bulk of them having made an average growth of 2½ ft.; a tree of this class is badly wanted in Marlborough.