

HANMER SPRINGS PLANTATION.

(Area, 600 acres, approximate; altitude, 1,225 ft.)

The past year has been an exceptionally good one for plantation-work, an abundant rainfall being recorded all through the year. The trees have done well, the past season's planting being a thorough success. The older trees in the plantation have made good growth, and larch in many instances have grown 3 ft. to 4 ft.

Owing to rains and heavy frosts in June, about five thousand Norway spruce, planted on a swampy piece of land, were thrown out of the ground. Losses of this sort can scarcely be guarded against.

Acorns planted *in situ* during the year numbered 70,900, and 52,735 trees were planted, making a total of 123,635 (see Schedule E^g). Of this number 11,690 trees and 23,500 acorns were used to fill up blanks in previous plantings. The area planted during the year was 32½ acres.

The total number of trees in the plantation to date is 788,270, of which 374,200 have been grown from seed sown *in situ*. The area planted to date is 285 acres.

Marking 315,760 pits by free labour, for prisoners to open, cost 8s. 2½d. per thousand.

286,600 pits are available for the coming season's planting.

To drain several swamps 132 chains of drains were cut, at a cost of 4s. 4d. per chain.

A tool-house and implement-shed was built by a prisoner, the workmanship being all that could be desired.

Land to the extent of 92 acres was cleared of scrub during the year for tree-planting purposes.

By doing a little rabbiting occasionally the pest has been kept well down, and no damage has been done by them.

The expenditure for 1905-6 was £443 7s. 9d., the total expenditure since the initiation of the plantation being £2,567 9s. 3d.

The value of improvements for the year 1905-6 was £1,314 19s. 2d., the total value since the beginning of the plantation being £6,079 13s. 7d.

The average daily number of free men employed during the year was two.

It is expected that next season will complete the planting of the present enclosure, and preparations are being made to fence in a new block. A portion has been cleared of scrub in readiness for pitting operations, and a part of the fence-line chipped. Fencing will be commenced shortly.

Prison labour has again been very satisfactory, the value of the work done amounting to £563 18s. 2d., or an average of £48 13s. 11d. for each of the 11·58 men employed during the year.

The work has been well performed, and the thanks of the Department are due to the prison officers for the ready assistance given in carrying out the various works as directed.

Statements of expenditures and values are appended.

W. CROMB,
Assistant Forester.

STARBOROUGH NURSERY.

(Area, 104 acres; altitude, 100 ft.)

Rain fell on 115 days during the year, with a total fall of 33·14 in. The maximum temperature recorded was 96 deg. and the minimum 20 deg. The rainfall for the past year has been much above the average for this district. Old settlers state that a similar season was experienced thirty-two years ago. In a dry district like South Marlborough the visible results of a bountiful rainfall are very marked. The work at the nursery shows in a striking degree the influence of a moist season in the germination of the seeds, the vigour of the seedlings, and the larger number of plants produced per pound of seed sown. Trees in shelter-belts and shrubberies have made wonderful growth, and now afford considerable protection to young nursery-stock.

Seedling trees (one year old): Seed-sowing began on the 29th September and finished on the 5th October. With the exception of one or two small lots every variety sown has germinated well. The seedlings are strong and healthy, and on the whole are a first-rate crop.

Two-year-old trees have made fine growth, and are strong, healthy stuff.

Lining out trees: This work was begun on the 7th August and finished on the 13th September. The weather experienced during this period was showery, but on the whole favourable. The transplanted larch have made very strong growth, and are an excellent crop. The one-year *Pinus Laricio* that were lined out have done well, and the improved condition of the roots should give much better results when these trees are transferred to plantations.

Trees to the number of 642,000 were lined out, at a cost of 2s. 11½d. per thousand, over an area of 5 acres 3 roods.

The number of trees raised during the year was 900,200, valued at £870 17s. 6d.; and the number of trees in the nursery at the 31st March was 1,533,700, valued at £2,428 17s. 6d.

The estimated number of trees available for planting out in plantations is 600,000.

The total number of trees raised in the nursery from 1901 to 1906 is 2,165,375, valued at £4,213 5s. 3d.

During the year 371,100 trees were sent to plantations, &c., and their value was £1,252 1s. 3d.

The total output of trees to plantations from 1901-6 is 631,675, valued at £1,784 7s. 9d.

The expenditure for the year was £1,362 11s. 6d., and the total expenditure to 31st March, 1906, was £6,523 8s. 10d. The value of stock, improvements, &c., for the year is £4,587 17s. 11d., and the total value to March, 1906, £8,230 13s.