

42,570 pits remained over after last season's planting, and this number has since been increased to 614,074.

Clearing: A considerable amount of time was devoted to the cutting-down and burning of trees destroyed by the late fire, to enable continuance of pitting operations; but the expenditure in this direction should be a small item next year, as clearing of the burnt-out block is nearing completion.

During April of last year 230 chains of fire-breaks, averaging 100 ft. wide, were formed on leading ridges, and, although an area of about 38 acres is in this way practically rendered idle, these barriers to any encroaching fires are necessary if tree-planting operations are to be conducted with any degree of safety.

The whole of the breaks were disked and harrowed in February last, and future cultivation of same should be more easily carried on.

To further minimise the risk of any fire spreading from neighbouring areas to the plantation, a track about 8 ft. wide was scuffed by hand around boundary-fence line. The Pomahaka River reserve, however, is still the chief cause of uneasiness amongst those immediately connected with this station, as rocky faces, studded with tussocks and native bush, prohibit the formation of fire-breaks on this side, and the public have free access to the bordering reserve for the whole length of the plantation.

Greater facilities being required for the distribution of trees to planters, about 20 chains of zigzag bridle-track, 6 ft. wide, were formed up one of the main spurs, at 3s. 6d. per chain.

Formerly it was the custom for employees to provide their own accommodation here, but tent-life in winter-time has many disadvantages, and the erection of four huts, each 18 ft. by 12 ft., was hailed with pleasure by employees, who lost no time in shifting into their new quarters.

No paddock being available for horses, a number of sound posts and second-hand wire were carted from old boundary-fence at Conical Hills and utilised in the erection of 35 chains of fence, at 2s. 8½d. per chain, which encloses a handy paddock of about 3 acres.

The general tree-growth throughout may be regarded as unusually satisfactory, although on the drier, shingly situations the want of moisture was acutely felt for a short period. As in previous years, the larch are growing with considerably greater speed than other trees put out, and many of this species have added fully 3 ft. to their height. Success is also assured with the *Picea* family, which, after years of inactivity, commenced to put on healthy wood, and have since developed into robust-looking specimens generally. A fair average growth has been maintained by the various pines, although this class of tree succeeds to a greater degree locally during a wet season. It is pleasing to record the rapid development in sheltered sites of the deciduous trees that were cut back to ground-surface immediately after partial destruction by fire. Ash, oak, and sycamore have in most cases made exceptionally fine progress, and average about 5 ft. high after two seasons' growth.

Good results were anticipated some years ago in direct planting of acorns to steep hillsides, but up to the present this system has proved a failure, and these acorn blocks are now being converted into larch areas by the bar-planting process. In nearly every case the acorns germinate excellently, and reach a height of from 6 in. to 9 in. before the end of the first season, but the progress of the young oaks become less pronounced with each succeeding year. It may thus be seen that, for the successful raising of oak forest locally, transplanting from nursery to sheltered permanent sites is essential.

Maintenance: Clearing of strong growth from around young trees necessitated a good deal of labour, but work in this direction should gradually become a small item.

The spring frosts were not sufficiently severe to injure leaders of young trees, and consequently pruning operations were much reduced. A number of the older trees, however, required attention, and for this purpose three long-handled pruners were secured.

The expenditure for the year amounted to £1,715 0s. 4d., giving employment to a daily average of 15·4 men. The total expenditure since initiation is £10,314 9s. 5d.

One mare and harness, valued at £47 7s. 3d., was transferred from Kurow Nursery, and debited against this plantation account. Forty-four thousand trees were received from Kurow Nursery, and 30,500 trees, as per Schedule 5, were also received from Starborough Nursery, and included under the planting records.

	<i>Expenditure.</i>			£	s.	d.
Amount at 31st March, 1907	...	...	...	8,599	9	1
Pitting—						
549,079 grubber-pits	...	...	...	432	9	8
502,681 scuffed spots	...	...	...	220	17	10
Tree-planting (475,135)	...	...	...	274	10	10
Clearing	...	...	...	60	14	8
Cartage of trees	...	...	...	25	19	3
General upkeep of plantation	...	...	...	150	2	7
Horse-feed purchased and grown	...	...	...	10	0	0
Fencing	...	...	...	4	14	5
Buildings...	...	...	...	240	5	8
Tools, implements, &c.	...	...	...	62	17	1
Miscellaneous works	...	...	...	45	5	4
Forester's salary, supervision of free labour	...	...	...	136	1	0
Nurseryman's proportion of salary, and travelling-expenses	...	...	...	27	0	0
Supervision	...	...	...	24	2	0
				£10,314	9	5

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