

tation, 17s. 7d. Fencing, 3s. 2d.; rabbiting and clearing, 5s. 6d.; pitting for tree-planting, 12s. 6d.; tree-planting and distribution of trees, 13s. 9d.; formation of roads and fire-breaks, 1s. 3d.; tools, implements, repairs, &c., 1s. 3d.; supervision, 2s. 3d.: cost of planting and upkeep of 1,000 trees, £1 19s. 8d. Total raising and establishing cost, £2 17s. 3d. In the Rotorua State Nursery, where growth is more vigorous, it is possible to satisfactorily move a large number of two-year-old trees direct from seed-beds to the plantation, and this somewhat reduces the cost of production of certain trees to below the sum it costs in the South Island. As about 2,722 trees are usually planted over an acre of ground, it will thus be seen that the total estimated expenditure connected with the creation of an acre of plantation will approximately reach £8 4s. 2d., although the cost varies annually, being influenced by labour and climatic conditions.

3. What are your opinions regarding the employment of prison labour in connection with afforestation operations?—Prison labour is specially desirable for afforestation work (1) when large areas of land are being operated upon, (2) when the ground-surface is easily prepared, (3) in localities where extremes in temperature or persistent rainfalls are not general.

4. What do you estimate the annual value of each prisoner's work?—At Hanmer Springs each prisoner during the past twelve months has been credited with having performed labour representing a value of £73 4s. 1d., or an increase of £4 7s. 8d. per man on the preceding year.

5. What number of prisoners were at the Hanmer Springs camp during the past twelve months, and what is the total value of the work performed by them?—The average number of prisoners actually employed was 15·46, and the average number in camp was 24·2. The total value of work performed during the year was £1,134 13s. 3d., as against £992 14s. 1d. in the previous year. Virtually there were eight men allocated to the looking-after of the camp. Fifteen men are practically working full time the whole year, and these figures show that the labour of 15·46 prisoners is equal to that performed by ten free workers. So that a free worker is worth one-third more than a prisoner.

6. You say that £73 is the value of a prisoner's work: does that sum include the supervision by the warders?—No. We arrive at the value in this way: we know that a free worker can dig 1,000 pits at 12s. 6d. a thousand, and if a prisoner makes 1,000 pits he also is credited with the same amount of liability for making that number, 12s. 6d.; so that the warders are not reckoned, but merely the amount of work that is performed.

7. What do you consider is the most economical method of conducting the work—by prison or free labour?—Undoubtedly the employment of prison labour at tree-planting is satisfactory as far as the Forestry Branch of the Lands Department is concerned, but it must be remembered that the expenditure attached to the providing of board, accommodation, and clothing of inmates of prison camps is borne entirely by the Justice Department, whose hearty co-operation with the Lands Department has been instrumental in making such a success of the undertaking. In my opinion evidence from the Justice Department bearing on the actual camp maintenance-work, and necessary supervision by warders and Gaoler in charge, would require to be considered before it would be possible to state definitely if tree-planting by prison labour is the most economical method of conducting State afforestation generally. All statistics in connection with the work performed by prison labour could be submitted in the course of a few days, when the preparation of the annual statements of expenditure incurred, &c., will be completed. But the reformatory value to the inmates of the tree-planting camps should not be overlooked when discussing the merits of prison labour.

8. What are your opinions regarding the distribution of trees to public institutions, local bodies, and private individuals?—If the distribution of trees from nurseries is undertaken without having made special provision for the same, the season's State tree-planting scheme is seriously interfered with. Many countries adopt a policy of distributing trees gratis to public bodies, but insist upon regulations governing the planting and subsequent maintenance-work being adhered to. Such plantations would undoubtedly be an asset to the Dominion. In my opinion much benefit would accrue if domains and public institutions were liberally assisted by the State in the matter of donations of trees, but planting conditions would require to be drawn up, otherwise indiscreet association of varieties and otherwise faulty planting methods would eventuate. Supplying trees to private individuals is another matter, and if private nurserymen are in the position to supply hardy stock at a reasonable rate to purchasers I see no reason why the State should enter into competition with them. It is, however, purely a matter of policy, but if the distribution of trees to domains, hospitals, schools, and other Government institutions were decided upon, such tree-raising would require to be distinct from the State's own afforestation work, and a special amount authorized annually for the purpose. If we were called on suddenly to supply large quantities of forest-trees to private people or public institutions it would interfere with our scheme of afforestation, and the quantity of land to be prepared the year before the scheme is put in force. When the matter is arranged I estimate the number of trees that would be ready for distribution at the proper time. A certain number of men are employed, and the required pits are dug three or four months in advance. So that if we were called upon at any time to distribute a large number of trees to public bodies it would mean that there would be a certain number of pits left over from that year, which under certain conditions would be valueless next year. There would therefore be an actual waste of the cost of making the pits.

9. Is it part of your duty to tender advice to public bodies in regard to tree-planting when they request you to do so?—Yes, every effort is made to assist public bodies by tendering solicited information, but, owing to pressure of departmental duties, rarely is it possible to do so to the desired extent. Collections of timbers, seeds, destructive insects, &c., are gradually being acquired, and in this way it is possible to transmit a great deal of information very accurately.