

NASEBY PLANTATION, CENTRAL OTAGO.

(Area, 2,850 acres; altitude, 2,450 ft.; commenced operations, 1900.)

In reviewing the past season's operations an outstanding feature is the severe climatic conditions which have prevailed. A dry winter, in which the rainfall for July and August was 169 points, was followed by a backward and windy spring. Persistent north-westerly gales blew during the whole of the planting season, and continued to blow well into the month of February. So severe did the wind become at times that planting operations had to be transferred to the sheltered gullies, the more exposed situations being left till the wind abated. The good effect of occasional showers that fell was soon nullified by the north-west gales. The rainfall recorded for the year was 26·57 in., which fell on 131 days, as compared with 36·41 in. of the previous year. The minimum temperature was 12°, in July, and the maximum 83°, in December. Frost occurred on 225 nights.

Trees to the number of 708,800 were received from the Ranturly Nursery. Of this number, 650,650 trees were planted on a new area of 239 acres, and the remaining 58,150 trees were used to replace failures in the previous year's planting. Of this season's planting larch has struck freely, and only a small percentage of failures will be recorded. Pines, however, which were planted later, suffered more severely from drought, and a slightly higher death-rate than usual has occurred. Established trees continue to make good headway, the average growth comparing well with former years. An adjoining area of 1,500 acres has been secured for afforestation purposes. Of this area about 500 acres has been securely fenced, which required 219½ chains of wire netting. Pitting was again carried on under the contract system, and a total of 406,900 pits have been prepared on the recently acquired area. A small area containing 30,000 pits was also completed on the top block, this work being carried out by day-labour. Fire-breaks have had the usual attention, the area ploughed being some 56½ acres. In order to make the plantations more secure from fire a strip of half a chain has been ploughed on the outside of the fence as well as the inside, so that double measures are taken when convenient. These outer breaks are kept completely bare by rabbits and stock, and require little or no attention. Fire depots, containing fire-fighting appliances, have also been placed at various points on the plantation. Rabbits on the new area were extremely numerous, and considerable trouble is being experienced in clearing the ground. By constant trapping, poisoning, and destroying the burrows it is hoped to have this area quite free from rabbits by the time trees are ready to be transferred from the nursery. To provide better accommodation for the employees five huts (10 ft. by 12 ft.) are being erected to replace the tents formerly used. These huts have stoves supplied, and are on skids, so that they may be removed to any part of the plantation. Tents with frames were only temporary at the best, and were in the long-run more costly than huts. The trees on the old site are making satisfactory progress, and a good deal of attention has been paid to this area in order to exterminate vermin. It is difficult to account for the presence of vermin, as the enclosure is securely netted; but as there are horses, &c., feeding alongside, a hole is often made with the feet while grazing close up. These holes are hard to detect, and I think this is a frequent cause for intrusion of the rabbits. Owing to the distance between the pits being increased to 4 ft. 6 in. for *Pinus Laricio*, *P. ponderosa*, and *P. Benthamiana*, and an average of 6 ft. for *Pinus radiata*, the present enclosure will not hold the output for 1915. As this land is infested with rabbits, I would recommend, if possible, that the remaining portion of the recently acquired area be fenced.

Trees to the number of 2,584,874 are now established on the old and new sites, covering an area of 958 acres. The expenditure for the year amounts to £1,462 16s. 11d., and to date £8,720 14s. 10d.

Rainfall, Temperature, &c.

Month.	Rainfall.	Number of Days Rain fell.	Temperature.		Number of Days Frosts occurred.
			Maximum.	Minimum.	
1914.	In.		Deg. F.	Deg. F.	
April	3·45	16	68	22	15
May	3·45	13	57	15	30
June	1·58	11	50	16	30
July	0·81	6	52	12	28
August	0·88	8	58	14	29
September	1·28	10	68	14	25
October	2·30	9	76	20	14
November	2·32	14	72	22	14
December	2·21	9	83	24	14
1915.					
January	2·06	12	81	24	3
February	3·07	12	74	22	8
March	3·16	14	72	24	15
Totals	26·57	134	..	..	225

T. O. SCREEN,
Plantation Foreman.