

Attention was given to the safeguarding of the plantation against fire, and all boundary fire-breaks were ploughed or disked, the internal fire-breaks also receiving attention as far as possible. The usual attention was given to keeping the rabbit pest in check, a permanent rabbitier being engaged for this work, his time being occupied between Balmoral Plantation and Hanmer Springs. The clearing of growth around young trees was done where necessary; the grubbing-out of gorse, broom, and brier entailed a good deal of labour. This work, however, will not be necessary when the trees are forward enough to take care of themselves, which will probably be in another two or three years. There is no sign of damage by deer or other animals.

The daily average number of men employed was 8·2.

Summary showing Area of Hanmer Springs Plantation (2,906½ Acres in Trees).

	How occupied.	Acres.
Pines	...	1,409
Pines and Douglas fir mixture	...	140½
Larch	...	1,177
Douglas fir	...	20
Spruce	...	60
Alder	...	71½
English birch, poplars, willows, &c.	...	28½
Paddocks and cropping-areas	...	230
Roads and fire-breaks	...	150
Land unsuitable for planting, including swamps, river-beds, &c.	...	381½
Total	...	3,668

(Survey incomplete; areas approximate only.)

BALMORAL PLANTATION.

(Area, 7,636 acres; altitude, 550 ft.; commenced 1916.)

The climatic conditions of the past season cannot be said to have been favourable, drying north-west winds having been very prevalent during the spring and early summer months. From the further experience gained of this locality, where the soil is generally of the very poorest description and periods of extreme dryness are frequent, it is quite evident that its afforestation will not be easily accomplished, and that a particularly robust and well-rooted class of tree is essential to ensure a reasonable amount of success annually.

The year's work comprised felling scrub, pitting, and planting, maintenance-work forming only a small item of expenditure. It is regrettable to have to report that the general results obtained from the past season's planting were not good, the loss among the trees dealt with being very heavy. *Pinus Laricio*, which comprised the bulk of the trees planted, was almost a total failure, the rate of loss being 95 per cent. In *Pinus ponderosa* the failures were not quite so heavy. This abnormally heavy death-rate may be mainly attributed to north-west gales which were experienced during the planting period.

All established trees are making excellent headway, and, with the exception of *Pinus austriaca*, which is in places affected by the aphid, have a healthy and vigorous appearance. Trees to the number of 515,500 were planted during the year, and of this number 397,660 were planted on new area, and 117,840 were utilized to replace failures in former plantings. The number of pits opened during the year was 1,356,818, and it is estimated that 841,309 pits are now available for the coming season's planting. The area cleared of scrub was 479 acres, all timber suitable for firewood being set aside for camp use and carted to depots. The new area planted with trees was 260 acres, but it is estimated that almost the whole of this will require replanting.

As the area set aside for afforestation purposes at this station is overrun with rabbits, a permanent rabbitier was engaged to keep the pest in check. Repairs to tools, fences, &c., entailed some labour during the year.

The foreman's cottage, together with the necessary outbuildings, was completed early in the year, and six new huts were erected to provide accommodation for an increased number of workmen. The building of a small smithy will be undertaken at an early date, and the erection of a cookhouse for workmen is also under consideration. As the areas now being operated upon are some distance from the camp, arrangements will soon have to be made for the transfer of the camp to a more central position.

The daily average number of men employed was 13·1.

Summary showing Area of Balmoral Plantation (992 Acres in Trees).

	How occupied.	Acres.
Pines	...	978½
Douglas fir	...	10
Poplars and English birch	...	3½
Fire-breaks, tracks, paddocks, &c.	...	680
Unplanted land	...	5,964
Total	...	7,636