

being rimu, with a small quantity of totara and miro. The sale conditions stipulated that the timber be milled within three years, and that payment be made as follows: 20 per cent. of the purchase price and the usual license fee and appraisal costs to accompany the tender, the balance to be paid in four equal six-monthly instalments secured by approved promissory notes. In addition the customary ground-rent of 1s. per acre was charged.

GRAZING.

A comprehensive investigation and study of the grazing-values of State-forest lands was completed during the year by the soil and grazing specialist of the Service, and as a result of the conclusions arrived at a grazing policy and method of control are now being finalized. While grazing uses of State forests must always be subordinated to the major activity of producing timber crops, nevertheless the proper use of stock in certain State-forest regions is of benefit silviculturally in checking the growth of inflammable undergrowth and in the reduction of the fire hazard. In drawing up grazing regulations care is being exercised to see that all grazing is accounted for, and the number of stock maintained as is commensurate with sound silvicultural practice. The State-forest lands are now undergoing classification for grazing assessment of long- and short-term leases and permits.

GAME AND RECREATION.

The year is notable for the extended use that has been made of the State forests by tourists, trampers, fishermen, and hunters. Particularly in the case of woodlands in the neighbourhood of the larger centres is this interest evidenced. The rapidly increasing popularity of the national forest domain as a people's playground is being encouraged by the Service. During the year a general instructional policy has been prescribed for the guidance of the Service staff with regard to forests and bushes bordering lakes, streams, and public roads, as follows:—

(Circular No. 26.)

State Forest Service, 10th November, 1921.

To all Conservators and Field Officers.

Scenery and Timber Sales.

As the national economy of New Zealand develops and her population increases the recreational value of State forests will likewise increase. The time will come when the national forests will be extensively utilized as vacation playgrounds by the people. It is therefore desirable that all officers carefully regard this aspect when defining timber-sale boundaries. Virgin forest growth bordering lakes, travelled highways, camping-places, bits of forest adjacent to summer resorts, &c., should be carefully excluded from the operation of the sale. Trees of outstanding size or magnificence, where easily accessible, might well be reserved, and generally wherever the forest or woods have a potential scenic or amenity value every consideration should be given by the responsible officer in preserving these assets from exploitation or destruction by exploitation.

Every responsible officer is therefore instructed to consider the æsthetic values of any timber-sale offering in defining the boundaries of same.

DIRECTOR OF FORESTRY.

The interrelation of forests, trees, and native birds as regards their perpetuation and regrowth requires the careful protection from destruction of pigeons, bell-birds, tuis, &c., and it has therefore been necessary in certain cases to refuse access to guns, rifles, and other firearms, and to confine shooting to the camera (Orongorongo, for instance). The introduction of exotic game has more or less upset the natural balance of a widespread area of State forests in New Zealand. Especial reference is made to deer. This animal is rapidly becoming an unmitigated nuisance throughout the Rotorua, Wairarapa, central Wellington, Nelson, Otago, Southland, and Westland regions, and its rapid increase is causing considerable alarm and concern in many parts of the country. As well as causing serious damage to cereal and root crops, very substantial destruction of natural tree regrowth, plantations, and reproduction has already resulted through the districts in question. The annual national loss from this source is estimated at £100,000. In some regions it is now a case of deer or forests. It is satisfactory to note that a conference has been called by certain acclimatization societies to consider this question, and already steps have been taken to keep the herds in check.

The Service has undertaken a comprehensive survey of the animal, its depredations, its possible economic usefulness, and means of control. A full report will be submitted during the current year.

The opossum has become a permanent denizen of our New Zealand forests, and promises to be a very productive source of by-revenue to the State and profit to the community. During the year over sixteen thousand skins, of a value of £5,337, were produced in and exported from New Zealand. Of this number it is estimated that at least ten thousand were trapped in State forests. Through its Ranger staff the Service was active in allocating trapping-grounds, repressing poaching and trespass, and in advising on proposed releases for propagation purposes. It is realized that opossum liberation in new country should be carefully considered and all factors weighed before turning loose so fertile and versatile an animal as the opossum. In this connection the Service has closely co-operated with the Department of Internal Affairs and certain acclimatization societies with a view to safeguarding the community interest.

Honorary Forest Rangers.

Many forest lovers and well-wishers have from time to time intimated a desire to co-operate with the Forest Service in protecting and safeguarding the forest values and native fauna therein. In order, therefore, that a suitable recognition may be publicly given to these estimable gentlemen, the