

CHAPTER III.—THE STATE FORESTS.

1. GENERAL.

Summary of Areas under Control.

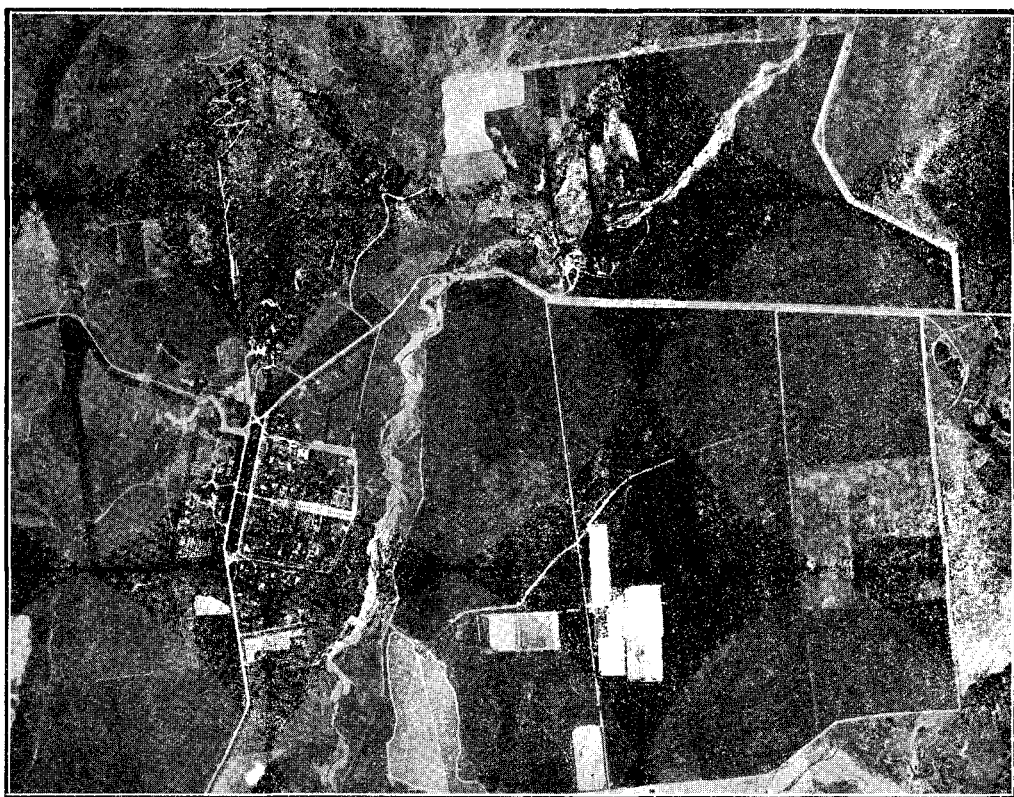
A perusal of the figures published in Appendix I of this report will show that under all headings a grand total of 7,656,844 acres are now under the control of the State Forest Service. In other words, 11.54 per cent. of the superficial area of the Dominion has been dedicated to the business of forestry.

Areas actually proclaimed since last report are State forests, 90,751 acres, and provisional State forests, 25,435 acres, while a total of 13,030 acres, comprising mostly portions of provisional State forests suitable for settlement, has been withdrawn and made available for that purpose.

At the close of the year negotiations were in progress for the acquisition of further extensive areas for forestation purposes, and it is anticipated that these will be successfully completed at an early date.

Legislation.

The Forests Amendment Act, 1926, was passed on the 11th September, 1926. This measure authorized the State Forest Service to sell, as agent, timber and other forest-produce for any State Department or local authority; provided for national-endowment land being set apart as State forest, and for the unimproved value of any national-endowment land so dealt with being paid to the National Endowment Account; fixed an additional penalty for unlawfully dealing with forest-produce;



PORTION OF AN AERIAL SURVEY OF HANMER PLANTATION.

made special provision for the granting of licenses to cut timber for mining or coal-mining; made provision whereby any lands in certain Greymouth and Westport harbour endowments could be administered by the Service; validated timber-cutting and tramway rights granted by Wardens in Westland and Karama Mining Districts which were found to be invalid; transferred to the Service the administration of those rights; and repealed sections 147 to 152 of the Mining Act, 1908, and section 8 of the Forests Amendment Act, 1925.

When the administration of the validated Wardens' grants was taken over many difficulties presented themselves, as the statutes and regulations under which they are administered are extremely complicated and difficult to construe. The difficulties are, however, gradually being surmounted, and the change of control will prove beneficial to the State, to holders of the timber-cutting and tramway rights, and to the local authorities.

By section 6 of the Finance Act, 1926, the Minister of Finance was authorized to borrow an additional £500,000 for the purposes of the Forests Act, 1921-22.

Sections 5, 6, and 7 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1926, cancelled the reservation for scenic purposes over two scenic reserves containing 1,970 acres and 62 acres 2 roods respectively, and for a public-pound site over a pound reserve containing 1 acre, and set aside the three areas as permanent State forest. The areas are all situated in Paeroa Survey District, and had already been included in or used in conjunction with Waiotapu Plantation.