

Future operations in this respect will to some extent be affected by the Government's pronouncement that the question of forestry is to be regarded as fundamentally a land-use problem, calling for full co-ordination between the Departments of Lands, Agriculture, and Forestry. In future, therefore, all unplanted afforestation areas will be re-examined in conjunction with the officers of those Departments, particularly with respect to soil-analysis and general suitability for settlement purposes. It will be appreciated, however, that the adjustment of a forestry programme is governed largely by such physical factors as the availability of tree-seed from overseas, nursery stocks, suitable land, mobility of equipment, &c., and therefore a period of some years may elapse before any substantial change of objective can be fully effective.

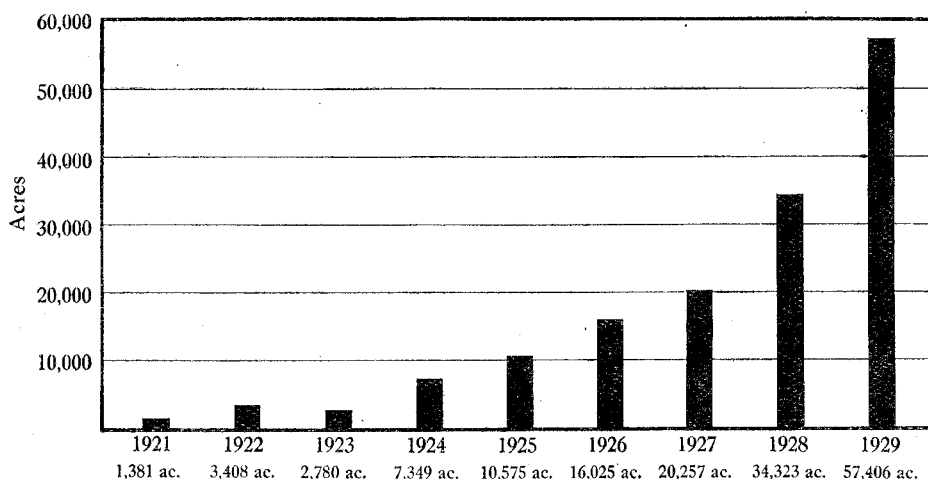
In the past the main planting activities of the State have been carried out upon the Rotorua-Taupo pumice lands, but these remaining areas will now be governed by a policy of careful demarcation and utilization for agricultural purposes. Notwithstanding this fact, however, ample areas should still be available to justify the continuation of planting in the pumice region, although probably on a much smaller scale than heretofore.

The extensive coastal sandy wastes of the North Island and the arid and rocky country of the South Island have been examined for afforestation purposes, but it is considered that both these classes of country are unsuitable, because, although trees can be grown on such lands, the cost would be too great to justify the State in doing so as a commercial afforestation proposition, apart from the fact that such areas are usually remote from markets and are indifferently served by roads and railways. The alternative, therefore, is to select reasonably-sized and suitably-situated blocks throughout the country which are not, and never can be, classed as arable, and are not at present profitable pasture-lands.

If the intensity of pasture-management in the Dominion increases to such a degree during the next half-century as to ensure the profitable settlement of some of this now marginal and ultra-marginal land, arrangements to this end can be made after one forest rotation, and the land thus released will have been appreciably improved by the tree crop, and by forest roads, tracks, and drains; and it will have been revenue-producing in the interim. It is probable that some of the land now being afforested by the State comes within this category; but this proportion is comparatively small, and the initial stages of any policy must of necessity be on general lines, with detailed adjustment later as experience and practice prove desirable.

With the commencement of afforestation for Nelson Region (referred to in last year's report), tree-planting is now proceeding in all forest-conservation regions, with the exception of Southland. The claims of this province have not been overlooked, and numerous properties have been inspected and reported upon in the endeavour to secure an area of sufficient size and suitable access to constitute an economic plantation unit. A *sine qua non* in this connection is land of inferior farming-value in proximity to a railway or main highway, but, as the great bulk of the easily accessible land in Southland is too valuable to be used for tree-planting, it has hitherto not been possible to acquire suitable property. Certain proposals are now receiving Governmental consideration, and it is hoped that the timber requirements of this province will be adequately met in the near future.

A new afforestation project, known as Eyrewell Plantation, was commenced in Canterbury by the purchase of 17,228 acres of poor, freehold, scrub-covered country situated about twenty-seven miles by road from Christchurch, on the banks of the Waimakariri River, and, as will be seen in Appendix II, 3,135 acres have already been planted. With practically no indigenous forests of economical value, Canterbury is less fortunately situated than her sister provinces, and for many years has had to go beyond her borders to secure her domestic timber requirements. It is hoped, however, that this long-felt need will in time be met, in a measure at least, by the extensive exotic plantations at Hanmer Springs, Balmoral, and Eyrewell.



GRAPH 2.—COMPARISON OF ANNUAL TREE-PLANTING OPERATIONS IN STATE-FOREST PLANTATIONS FOR YEARS 1921-29.

Operating-costs.

The following costing statement, based upon actual out-of-pocket expenditure upon afforestation over a period of seven years, has been prepared to illustrate comprehensively the progress made in this aspect of the Service's activities.