A NOTE ON THE PRODUCTION OF CREOSOTED FENCE POSTS BY THE STATE FOREST SERVICE.

A new and important development in the utilization of the State exotic forests is the establishment of non-pressure creosoting plants.

As shown in the illustration on the opposite page, creosoted posts are already being produced; similar results are being obtained at Conical Hills (Otago) and a third creosoting plant will shortly be in operation at Hanmer Springs.

Briefly, the process is as follows:—

Posts (either European larch, eucalypts, Austrian or Corsican pine) are cut to standard length (6 ft. 6 in. in the North and 5 ft. 9 in. in the South), and the bark is either removed in the forest or square-sawn: the posts are then stacked in a seasoning yard for several months until sufficiently dry for creosoting.

The treating process consists of immersing the seasoned posts in creosote at a temperature of 180°-200° F., for a period varying with the timber species, then discharging the hot creosote and refilling the tanks with cool creosote; by this "hot and cold" process, degrees of penetration and absorption of creosote similar to that obtained by the pressure process are obtained. A minimum average service life of 20 years is anticipated, well treated posts creosoted between 1922 and 1925 still being sound and in use in various districts.

The treating tanks are 37 feet long, 4 feet wide and 4 feet deep and steam heating is supplied through coils at the bottom of the tanks.

A normal charge is approximately 250 posts, and with two tanks operating simultaneously as at Rotorua, it is possible to treat at least 2,000 posts per week.

The treated posts are required to conform to certain specifications, and at least half a gallon of creosote per cubic foot of timber is retained.

The price of creosoted posts varies from £8 to £12 according to their dimensions and the locality of the plant; a standard grade of creosoted post produced at Rotorua measures 6 feet 6 inches x 4 inches to 5½ inches minimum diameter.

Telephone and the smaller transmission poles are being similarly treated to meet orders placed by Electric Power Boards and Government Departments.

T.C.B.