

bacon, nails, boots, clothing, and tinned foodstuffs. To meet the demand it was necessary to draw large quantities of case shooks from the South Island for North Island packers, and at the present time virtually the entire capacity of South Island box-factories surplus to local needs is being shipped to the North Island. Throughout the North Island, box-factory stocks are consistently subnormal and unsatisfactory, rendering it difficult to manufacture boxes from timber of the requisite dryness.

Prices of indigenous building-timbers, both wholesale and retail, remained unchanged throughout the year. To maintain the production of insignis pine, which was and still is essential to the maintenance of New Zealand's abnormal export programme for foodstuffs and munitions, the Price Tribunal granted increases in a number of instances to sawmillers who were able to establish to its satisfaction that increased costs beyond their control had resulted in current approved prices becoming uneconomic. Such increases generally resulted from higher log costs, occasioned by the necessity of securing logs from farther afield.

75. Timber Imports.—As disclosed by Appendix IV, total imports for the year 1943, principally from Australia, Canada, and the United States, amounted to 14,714,000 board feet. Of the 9,774,000 board feet of hardwoods received from Australia, 148,722 sleepers accounted for 3,470,000 board feet. Export of hardwoods from Australia remains under strict permit control, and all orders for essential requirements are passed through the Office of the Timber Controller to the New Zealand Supply Liaison Officer in Sydney, who places the order as directed by the Commonwealth Timber Controller. Freight space from Australia continues to be in very short supply, especially from minor ports. Only occasional loadings are available from West Australia, and then only to eastern ports, thus involving extra costs of transshipment, &c. Of the 3,539,000 board feet of Douglas fir received from Canada, by far the greater portion was merchantable grade suitable only for heavy constructional work and ship repairs. Fairly regular shipments have been available throughout the year, but specifications have had to be amended in accordance with available supplies in Canada. Clear grade has been in short supply owing to the heavy demand in both North America and Great Britain, with the result that local industries requiring clear Douglas fir have been compelled in some cases to accept inferior substitutes. Redwood importations from the United States amounted to 1,364,000 board feet and served to supplement local supplies of totara, particularly for the production of joinery for housing and hospital buildings. Of other timbers imported, amounting to 37,000 board feet, the principal item was sugar-pine from the United States. This wood is used almost exclusively for engineers' pattern making, and supply was difficult to arrange; it was necessary to accept sizes not quite in accordance with those usually imported.

76. Timber Exports.—The reduction in exports from 7,500,000 board feet in 1942 to only 4,500,000 board feet in 1943 is wholly accounted for by smaller rimu shipments from Greymouth to Australia. Not only has there been a shortage of trans-Tasman shipping, but even when boats have been available it has often been unsafe to work the bar at that port. While there has also been a decline in insignis-pine shipments to the Pacific islands and to Australia as a result of local shortages, the exports of silver-beech increased from the low figure of 142,000 board feet in 1942 to 719,000 board feet in 1943, this having been effected as an exchange for hardwoods released by the Commonwealth Timber Controller.

CHAPTER X.—UTILIZATION TECHNOLOGY

77. General.—Reduction of woods and mill waste by improved logging, transport, and conversion practices constitutes the outstanding long-term objective of national forest utilization technology, more particularly in the exotic forests. The short-term problem is that of adapting to many uses for which they are not inherently suitable a wide range of the indigenous and exotic timbers as substitutes for more suitable imported or local timbers not now available or in short supply as a result of war developments.

78. Grading of Timber.—It developed during the year that in Christchurch, although building-timbers were being sold under national grade names, they were not being supplied to the relevant definitions and specifications, but this position has since been voluntarily corrected and wood-users reassured that the national grading rules for building-timbers will be strictly observed. Further progress has been made in developing special provisions for individual timbers as supplementary to the proposed standard hardwood grading rules. The extending use of tawa, in some instances without due regard to the special care required in its handling and storage, emphasizes the need for their early completion. Standard specifications for New South Wales hardwoods in the more important use groups have now been completed.

79. Specifications for Finished Products.—The completion of a survey of sizes and profiles for dressed building lines has made it possible to finalize proposals for standardizing those features in three types of weatherboarding, flooring from 4 in. and 6 in. stock, secret nailed flooring from 3 in. stock, and matchlining in three thicknesses. Proposals for standard profiles and sizes of mouldings and joinery were examined in detail before submission to the Standards Institute. Considerable time was also spent in assisting with the development of specifications for standard household furniture for rehabilitation purposes. Two emergency specifications for special types of plywoods were prepared in co-operation with other interests, but are regarded as unsatisfactory, and must therefore be completely redrafted in the interests of future market development.

With the anticipated use of exotic framing for semi-prefabricated house construction and the increasing demand for Dressing B and better grades of indigenous timbers for all classes of finishing and furniture work, &c., it will be entirely feasible to secure a significant