

The box-factory's output of case shooks used a gross total of 8,691,000 board feet of timber (7,645,000) and created a new Waipa record in box production. Periodical difficulties were again experienced in securing rail trucks for distribution, but none of the factory's customers were at any stage left without boxes, although some had only a few days' supply on hand during the months of peak demand. On these occasions the accumulated stocks at the plant became so great that the large shook-storage sheds were filled to capacity. Sales of dressed timber during the year amounted to 459,000 board feet (383,000).

Profits from the box-factory operations amounted to £19,142, as compared with £20,596 for the previous year. The decrease in profit was due to the change-over to peacetime production, for which a higher standard of finish is necessary.

68. *Departmental Wood-preserving Activities.*—The total quantity of produce treated by the three creosoting plants was maintained at a figure equal to last year's. At Waipa there was a substantial increase in the number of poles treated and a proportionate reduction in the number of posts. At Hanmer Springs, mainly poles were treated, while the Conical Hill plant continued to treat fencing-material for departmental use. At both Waipa and Hanmer Springs seasoning yards, stocks have fallen to a very low level owing to shortage of labour to cut produce in advance for seasoning prior to creosoting, and a serious reduction in the output of creosoted material will result next year.

69. *Exotic Forest Exploitation.*—Experience since the cessation of the war has clearly demonstrated that the timber available from the exotic forests of the Dominion is destined to have an immediate and much wider field of utilization than was envisaged even a year ago. Based on pre-war standards and conceptions of timber use, the current product of the exotic forests can only be described as knotty stock, which is the best that can be sawn from shelter-belts and farm wood-lots or from the unthinned stands now being logged. Nevertheless, realization that the wood-using industries of New Zealand must rely for evermore on a strictly limited supply of indigenous timbers has forced consumers to adapt the available exotic softwoods to many of their requirements.

As explained in other sections of this report, some grades now obtainable in insignis pine can successfully replace rimu for house-construction, furniture, and other purposes, provided appropriate care and attention are paid to their production, grading, seasoning, and use. Although it is possible to-day on a strong sellers' market to sell timber produced by out-of-date equipment, this position will not continue indefinitely: better conversion and marketing technique will be required in order to maintain sales as the demand is overtaken. Exotic-timber production by the State Forest Service has established standards of sawing, seasoning, and grading hitherto unknown in New Zealand, and the general adoption of these methods is essential to achieve the most efficient production of sawn exotic timber and the expansion of both domestic and export markets.

The investigation into logging and milling practices in North America and Europe, referred to in last year's report, has been concluded, and an exhaustive report will be ready for publication at an early date. In the meantime certain information of immediate interest to the sawmilling industry has been handed to the Dominion Federated Sawmillers' Association and has been published in three sections in the October, 1945, December, 1945, and May, 1946, issues of the *New Zealand National Review*.

CHAPTER IX.—TIMBER TRADE

70. *Production of Sawn Timber.*—Under the Sawmill Registration Regulations 1942, 445 (452) sawmills were registered for the year ended 31st March, 1946. A list of those registered as at 31st August, 1945, was published in the *Gazette*, 1945, at page 1274. During the year 63 new sawmills were registered, of which 40 commenced cutting and produced a total of 14,038,000 board feet of timber. On the other hand, there were 21 units, with an aggregate output of 4,024,000 board feet during the previous year, which, for such reasons as exhaustion of bush supplies or destruction by fire, did not cut any timber this year.