

its precision-sawn timber and unrivalled kiln-drying facilities, the Forest Service has been able to pioneer the use of insignis pine with extraordinary success, and in the short time since the war ended the timber has been employed by many industries to an extent that would not have been deemed possible even a year ago.

In the building industry the timber has already been proved suitable for joists, scantling, and roof framing, though special care is necessary in grading and drying. Compliance with the grading rules issued by the New Zealand Standards Institute is essential. As regards drying, the Forest Service is unequivocally opposed to the use of air-seasoned insignis pine for house-construction. The supplies available consist almost entirely of sapwood, which is particularly susceptible to sapstain attack, even when good air-seasoning practices are adopted. Whilst sapstain in itself is not detrimental, timber so attacked holds moisture to a far greater extent than stock free from stain and becomes a focal point for infection by decay-producing organisms. In the interests of the building industry and of the future reputation of the timber, the State Forest Service urges that local bodies should insist upon kiln-drying when approving the use of insignis pine for house-building, and in support of this view the Waipa Mill sells green insignis pine only to such customers as will undertake to kiln-dry the timber before using or selling it for housing construction. A start has been made with the derivation of grading rules for insignis-pine flooring and weatherboarding. Although the average class of log now being converted into sawn timber will yield only a small percentage of weatherboarding, large quantities of an acceptable grade of flooring should become available.

During the war, insignis pine, when available, was used for furniture-manufacture and also for some joinery. Since the conclusion of hostilities the North Island demand for these purposes has exceeded the supply, and many possible uses must remain unexplored until production is further expanded. The most common use of insignis pine in this respect has been as core wood overlaid with veneer or plywood of other timbers, and this development must be encouraged in order to conserve rimu-supplies for flooring and weatherboarding. To assist the furniture and allied industries, therefore, the Government is approving the importation both of fancy veneers and of logs and flitches for local veneer production. For the manufacture of the cheaper grades of furniture, rimu will continue in short supply, but there are already clear indications that as insignis-pine production increases this species will be acceptable without veneer or plywood covering for this class of work. The Forest Service, for example, is already supplying clear shorts to manufacturers for use in tallboys, &c., and an increased usage in this field can be expected.

*75. Timber Imports.*—The imports of timber into New Zealand are shown in detail for the past three years in Appendix IV. During these years the quantities imported remained practically constant, varying between 15,000,000 board feet and 17,000,000 board feet. These quantities bear no relation whatever to demand in New Zealand, but represent the maximum quantities which it has been possible to buy overseas or for which shipping could be secured. As explained previously, during the immediate pre-war years New Zealand consistently imported 40,000,000 board feet of timber annually, and, as the then established policy virtually confined imports to species and quantities considered essential to the Dominion's economy, it can be well appreciated that the wood-users affected are now often in difficult straits. Actually, were supplies freely obtainable, the importation of timbers which could be classed in the essential category would be much greater than pre-war.

Australia, in common with other countries which normally are not self-supporting in timber, is feeling keenly the effect of the world-wide timber shortage. This has led to the Commonwealth's adopting a policy under which it will agree to supply hardwoods to New Zealand only if assured of softwoods in return. Although this policy hits the Dominion hard at the present time, when local demand for softwoods is so much in excess of production, it must be realized that New Zealand has no alternative, in that local production of substitute indigenous hardwoods would involve an even greater reduction in softwood output. The limited supply of hardwoods still available under the conditions described is vitally essential to New Zealand's welfare and economy.