

The standards adopted by the State Forest Service in seasoning and grading elicit high praise from timber-merchants, builders, and furniture-manufacturers, both in Australia and New Zealand, and the Forest Service loses no opportunity of stressing to sawmillers the desirability of introducing these standards in the interests of securing the maximum long-term return from the exploitation of the exotic forests.

CHAPTER IX.—TIMBER TRADE

70. *Production of Sawn Timber.*—Under the Sawmill Registration Regulations 1942, 527 (445) sawmills were registered for the year ended 31st March, 1947. A list of those registered at 31st August, 1946, was published in the *Gazette*, 1946, at page 1555. The total output of the 82 additional sawmills (not all of which came into production) amounted to 17,000,000 board feet for the year; but offsetting this figure there were 26 mills with an overall output the previous year of 14,000,000 board feet which produced no timber during the year under review.

The total production of sawn timber recorded by registered sawmills for the year ended 31st March, 1947, was 357,000,000 board feet, an increase of 13,000,000 board feet, or 4 per cent., on the previous year's output. This is an all-time record, the previous peak production being 353,000,000 board feet in 1925–26. However, it is worthy of mention that the increase in timber-production is greater than would appear from a *prima facie* comparison of the two figures, for in 1925–26 manufacture of plywood in New Zealand was negligible, whereas during the past year the log equivalent of an additional 7,000,000 board feet of sawn timber was converted into veneers and plywood. It is true that the Royal Commission on the timber and timber-building industries in 1909 reported the annual timber output for 1906–7 as 432,000,000 board feet, but as an investigation at a later date made it clear that the basis of computation was log measure, not sawn measure, those figures may not be used in comparative analyses. (The actual sawn measure equivalent of the 1906–7 output would be little more than 300,000,000 board feet.)

71. *Species cut.*—The most significant feature in the year's production was the increase in the cut of exotic species from 99,000,000 board feet to 115,000,000 board feet, equal to 32 per cent. of the year's total production. Insignis pine, with small quantities of other pine species, accounted for 113,000,000 board feet, the balance comprising mainly eucalyptus and poplar. With the exception of tawa, the indigenous species showed either no perceptible changes or else a small decrease. For instance, rimu declined by 3,000,000 board feet, kahikatea by 4,000,000 board feet, and totara by 1,000,000 board feet, while matai, relatively stable for the past five years at 18,000,000 board feet, maintained its output at the same level. Tawa-production has been steadily increasing ever since 1939, when imports of special-purpose timbers for furniture, &c., virtually ceased, and production last year almost reached 8,000,000 board feet, as against 5,000,000 board feet the previous year.

The whole of the overall increase in production of 13,000,000 board feet was due to increased cutting of exotic species, mainly in the Rotorua and Canterbury Conservancies. In Rotorua the increase is indicative of a trend which will continue for some years and which, as the large areas of exotic forest come more and more into production, will make the Rotorua Conservancy the principal timber-producing district of New Zealand. In Canterbury the increase is temporary, being mainly the result of operations directed at salvaging the timber blown down in the 1945 gale.

72. *Man-power.*—The sawmilling industry continued during the year to operate under difficult labour conditions, and, in spite of improvements in wages and in working conditions, the losses through natural and other causes have in most districts exceeded the gains that the industry, in common with other fields of labour, had previously experienced as the result of the further demobilization of the Armed Forces. The number of ex-servicemen returning to or taking up employment at the sawmills has been much