

increase being particularly important owing to the very small imports of redwood obtainable. The increased cutting of 2,000,000 board feet of tawa served to glut the market with this timber during the last quarter of the year, particularly in lower grades. The marketing of this timber was undoubtedly prejudiced by the greater timber supply available, but it is believed that, provided appropriate care is taken in marketing, preservation, and use, the recession in demand will be temporary. Demand for kahikatea and beech species still continued much ahead of supply, despite increases of 3,000,000 board feet and 4,000,000 board feet respectively in the cutting of these timbers.

The increase in exotic-timber production, amounting to 26,000,000 board feet, was double that of last year. North Island cutting amounted to 96,000,000 board feet, which is appreciably in excess of domestic demand, having regard to the concurrent supply of other timbers. To avoid hardship to sawmillers and to encourage further expansion in exotic-timber production, every effort is being made to improve the current level of export. Based on present indications, however, it will not be possible to secure loadings on trans-Tasman shipping from Auckland for more than 6,000,000 board feet of timber in 1949, and in order to export an estimated surplus of approximately three times this total, endeavours are being made to have ships loaded at Tauranga. The possibility of loading at ports in the southern part of the North Island is also being explored, but this will involve the difficulties of longer rail haulage and heavier freight charges.

72. *Man-power*.—More men are now employed in the North Island sawmilling industry than at any time previously. This position can be considered remarkable for a period when the general demand for labour has continued to exceed supply, and it is primarily the result of providing suitable living-accommodation for bush workers.

Sawmillers operating in indigenous areas where accommodation was inadequate have taken advantage of the Timber Workers' Housing Scheme (referred to in paragraph 100) to procure additional houses and improve existing dwellings, thus removing the major obstacle to securing their full labour complement. Other operators requiring new houses in indigenous bush are invariably using the Scheme to provide all the accommodation needed.

In the principal exotic timber areas, sawmillers whose mills have a potentially long life are providing permanent housing near their mills, but some timber-merchants, boxmakers, builders, and sawmillers are erecting sawmills in urban areas, usually adjacent to their existing retail or conversion plants. This latter group is generally influenced by one or other of two considerations in following this policy. In some cases their bush resources are too small or scattered to warrant the establishment of a rural sawmill, while in others the deciding factor has been the freedom from accommodation difficulties which urban sawmilling makes possible.

In the South Island, although man-power employed in sawmilling increased steadily throughout the year on the whole, little increase was recorded on the west coast, principally because of competition for available labour from the mining industry. The Westland sawmillers did not take immediate advantage of the facilities provided under the timber-workers' housing scheme, but now its value has been realized and houses are being erected, better progress in securing additional labour can be expected. Most of the additional labour secured for sawmilling in the South Island found employment in exotic sawmills in Canterbury, many of which were situated near or in centres of large population.

For the first time the industry in both Islands received assistance from the pool of selected workers engaged in Great Britain, a total of 92 men being allocated to country sawmills.

Other references to man-power are made in paragraph 101.