

The supply of Australian hardwoods increased only slightly and shipping was again the principal factor in limiting deliveries to about half their pre-war level. Demand for sawn hardwoods continues to far exceed supply and it is still necessary to continue strict control of ordering and use.

It was possible in 1947 to procure the largest quantity of Douglas fir imported since 1929 and for the first time since the war commenced satisfactory stocks were held throughout the Dominion. The Building Controller's policy of restricting the use of indigenous timbers for purposes other than house-construction created a good market for Douglas fir and was largely responsible for the heavy sales made.

Although redwood was still unobtainable and western red cedar was not easy to buy, New Zealand can consider itself fortunate in securing over 3,000,000 board feet of the latter species. This was imported almost entirely for exterior joinery and made possible the supply of window joinery for the record house-building programme undertaken.

The heavy increase in landed price was a disturbing feature associated with the importations of all timbers from Canada and the United States of America. Before the war these woods were retailed at prices reasonably close to those of the New Zealand timbers which they complemented; they are now generally double the price of local comparable timbers. In addition to creating difficult conditions for merchants, manufacturers, and users, these prices intensify the search for substitutes, not necessarily in timber. It is hoped that this problem is appreciated and that efforts will be made to secure a reduction in delivered price.

76 Timber Exports.—Exports in 1947, amounting to nearly 9,000,000 board feet, were nearly 2,500,000 board feet in excess of the amount which it was possible to export in 1946. This figure reflects the slight improvement in shipping available during the year, but a much greater improvement is required immediately if the Dominion is to find an outlet for its expanding production of insignis pine. It was again found impossible to obtain shipping from the port of Greymouth, but during 1948 loadings are expected for about 3,000,000 board feet from this port.

The export of insignis pine in the form of sawn timber and box-shooks totalled 5,834,000 board feet (4,117,000). With shipping available, annual export could be anticipated to increase to 50,000,000 board feet between 1950 and 1952. It is generally appreciated that the main avenue open to the Dominion in seeking to balance trade with Australia lies in the export of substantial quantities of softwoods and other forest products to the Commonwealth.

Throughout the year continual inquiries for box-shooks were received from Australian buyers. The unsatisfied demand which existed on the domestic market precluded the possibility of releasing shooks for export, except those for the Pacific islands banana trade. Details of quantities exported are shown in Appendix V.

CHAPTER X.—FOREST TECHNOLOGY

77. Forest Experiment Station.—As the co-ordinating and initiating authority for all research activities in the Service, the Forest Experiment Station at Rotorua has made commendable progress in the first year of its establishment, in spite of inadequacy of staff and laboratory facilities. Preliminary work at the Station has necessarily been directed towards the evolution of a research policy, staff organization, classification of current projects, development of a system of project documentation, assembling of research literature, and liaison with conservancies. The staff at the end of the year consisted of 8 professional officers, 5 forest rangers, and a fluctuating number of foremen and trainees; the majority of the non-professional staff were engaged on national forest survey work. The staff establishment of a fully equipped station provides for several