

present position continues by the sheer force of circumstances associated with an all-time peak demand at a time when the exotic forests are incapable of playing in full the part ultimately expected of them. However, the status of the exotic forests is changing so rapidly that a planned reduction in the indigenous cut can be faced with equanimity, with the object of ultimately reducing output to a figure which can be maintained in perpetuity. The desirability of this objective is beyond dispute, and it will be achieved by regulating the release of State indigenous-forest areas for milling purposes. Little or no effect can be expected for several years, but it is planned to reduce the indigenous cut to a maximum of 100,000,000 board feet to 130,000,000 board feet by 1965, and thereafter ultimately down to an annual quota of only 50,000,000 board feet, which is regarded at the present juncture as the maximum which can be maintained on a sustained yield basis. This figure may be revised when the results of the national forest survey are available, since at the moment the actual sustained yield capacity of the indigenous forests is not known accurately; it may be more or less than 50,000,000 board feet, but at best it can be only a fraction of the total annual requirement at that date.

It might be urged that the cut of indigenous timber should be reduced more rapidly in the interests of conserving our remaining supplies, but unfortunately this is impracticable. One of the principal reasons for the popularity enjoyed by the indigenous timbers is their inherent capacity to yield high-grade defect-free timber greatly in excess of what can be expected from the exotic forests for many years to come. The exotic forests were established at a time when planting on a large scale was the primary objective, and large areas were planted up over a relatively short period; so much so, that the finer considerations of silviculture were lost to sight, and the necessary attention to pruning and thinning, so fundamental to the production of high-grade logs necessary for clean, attractive timber, was neglected. The result is that to-day the product coming off the saw is, on the whole, rather knotty stock which compares very unfavourably with the indigenous softwoods for finish and appearance which are so essential for such purposes as weatherboarding, flooring, joinery, interior finish, furniture, &c. The errors of the past in this respect can be rectified only slowly; silvicultural attention is being concentrated on these forests, but years must elapse before the required results are achieved. In the meantime there is no alternative but to rely on the indigenous forests for the bulk of the high-grade defect-free timber demanded for certain critical purposes.

Nevertheless, despite the inherent limitations of exotic timbers at the present time, an early appreciation of their merits for many purposes will ease the problems of wood-users generally. The essential point to remember is that insignis pine cannot be selected at random and be expected to be a satisfactory substitute for indigenous timber, nor can it always be used under the same conditions as indigenous timber; but subject to certain precautions it will give very satisfactory service for a wide variety of purposes. The New Zealand Standards Institute has already issued grading rules for house framing and scantling in these species, and these can be used with confidence. During the current year similar specifications will be available for flooring, weatherboarding, and also for finishing and factory grades. This means that wood-users will shortly be offered a comprehensive choice of insignis-pine grades as substitutes for all common uses of rimu. However, owing to the susceptibility of insignis pine to sap-stain attack which ruins its appearance and increases its affinity for moisture, special emphasis is laid on the desirability of limiting this defect in timber intended for permanent usage.

Sap-stain is effectively eliminated by kiln-drying soon after sawing, and can also be controlled by dipping in approved chemicals promptly after cutting if this is followed by efficient air-seasoning, or preferably kiln-drying. Provided the above precautions are carefully observed, the Forest Service unhesitatingly advocates the use of insignis pine for framing purposes in house construction where B.A. rimu is normally used. In