

were found useful to demonstrate advances in the technique of controlling forest fires to the annual conference of the United Fire Brigades' Association and other fire-control bodies.

(4) *Forest Fire Publicity*.—Publicity was again used as a weapon against forest fires in the 1948-49 fire season—October to March. It consisted chiefly of display advertising in rural and metropolitan newspapers, backed up with radio broadcast warnings at times of exceptional danger. Other publicity media such as posters and roadside warnings were also used. The Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council was again associated with the Forest Service's anti-fire publicity, and the press co-operated by featuring news stories which quickened the public's interest in the campaign.

Such publicity is an economical anti-fire weapon. There is no direct way of measuring its effect on the occurrence of forest fires, but it goes to the root of the matter: forest fires are started by men, whether carelessly or deliberately, not by natural agents. The purpose of the annual fire-prevention campaign is to cultivate a general sense of responsibility in the use of fire in scrub and grass lands bordering forests as well as in forests themselves, and to make it second nature for smokers to stamp out cigarette-butts and pipe ash. It sets out, too, to make every member of the public realize his duty to put out or report any fire endangering a forest. In this it is complementary to the Forest and Rural Fires Act, which gives to all citizens specific duties for the suppression of fires.

CHAPTER IX—FOREST ECONOMICS AND TRADE

TIMBER-PRODUCTION

(1) *Sawn Output*.—There has been a spectacular increase in timber-production during each of the past two years. Last year's report placed the total sawn output at 429,000,000 board feet, but when the final scrutiny of all figures was completed after publication of the report a further 4,000,000 board feet was added, making the total for 1947-48 433,000,000 board feet. For the year ended 31st March, 1949, there was an increase of 41,000,000 board feet, and the total cut of all species was 474,000,000 board feet, details by districts and species being given in Appendix VII. These statistics are provisional pending the official collection and publication of sawmilling statistics by the Government Statistician, but they are based on declarations furnished by sawmillers under the Sawmill Registration Regulations and therefore can be accepted as authoritative.

Such an increase of 34 per cent. from 354,000,000 board feet in 1946-47 to 474,000,000 board feet in 1948-49 is remarkable. The most significant feature, however, is the shifting of the incidence of production; of the total increase of 41,000,000 board feet last year, 36,000,000 board feet relates to the North Island and 31,000,000 to the Rotorua Conservancy. The detailed figures in Appendix VII emphasize the dominant importance of the Rotorua region as a source of timber-supplies. With a total sawn output of 153,000,000 board feet, this region now accounts for about one-third of the national output, and it almost equals the entire output of the South Island.

Production in the North Island during the past year was 315,000,000 board feet, and in the South 159,000,000 board feet. Thus, having regard to population and the effective level of demand, production in the two Islands is probably now in a better state of balance than ever before. Shipments of sawn timber from the South Island to the North—so regular a feature of the pre-war years—can now be regarded as virtually a thing of the past.