

which the output during the year has been 680,000 ft. of rimu and 280,000 ft. of white-pine, or an average monthly output of 80,000 superficial feet.

The net wholesale prices at present charged by timber-merchants in Napier are 14s. per hundred superficial feet for rimu and white-pine, and 28s. per hundred superficial feet for heart of totara.

Owing to an exceptionally wet season there have been no fires of any consequence during the last twelve months. Two years ago the forest at the back of Ngamoko, in the Norsewood district, was damaged to some extent from fire.

As regards the northern portion (Poverty Bay) of the Hawke's Bay Land District, it may be stated that for the past twelve months the sawmills have been cutting to their full capacity, as the building trade was very brisk both in town and country. There are four sawmills operating in the Motu district and one at Te Karaka, and up to the present they have all been kept busy.

The Motu mills are working under somewhat different conditions. One mill only loads on the railway-trucks at Matawai, while the other three have to load at Kowhai Road, and rail about five miles to Matawai on the section of the Public Works line, on which section they have to pay a freight of 8d. per hundred, making a total freight to Gisborne of 2s. 8d. per hundred for a distance of under fifty miles. Rimu is the chief timber used for building purposes, and there is only a limited demand for white-pine locally, the bulk of the pine being exported to Sydney. The export trade has been considerably handicapped by the high railway rates, as the freight here on white-pine is the same as on other timbers, whereas on other railway-lines there is a concession on white-pine for export.

The cost of production during the year has been considerably higher than for the preceding year. This has been made up partly by increased rates of wages, and also by increased cost of wire rope, oil, grease, and all other milling requisites, and the mills have had to raise their prices accordingly. There is also a great difficulty in securing efficient workmen, especially bushmen.

The five sawmills working in this district cut 5,740,000 superficial feet last year, comprising 3,400,000 ft. of rimu, 2,100,000 ft. of white-pine, and 240,000 ft. of matai, birch, and totara.

The prices charged in March by timber-merchants in Gisborne were—For rimu, clean ordinary building (green), 21s.; clean heart (green), 27s. 6d.; totara, clean heart (green), 42s. 6d.; matai, clean heart (green), 31s. The above prices are subject to 10-per-cent. discount to builders, and are per 100 superficial feet.

The question of the duration of supplies depends on so many conditions that it is impossible to give more than a guess, but I should say about fifteen years.

No timber of any value has been destroyed by bush fires in this district.

The total amount of royalties received for timber cut on Crown lands was £17 15s., and from State forests nil.

TARANAKI.

(G. H. Bullard, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The timber industry in the Taranaki Land District is in a comparatively small way. In different parts of the district there are about eight mills working. Of these only four at present are working on Crown land or State forests, but they also mill timber from other lands adjacent.

The bush in this district does not on the average contain a large quantity of timber per acre convertible for milling purposes, and it is only in comparatively small areas that contain about 5,000 ft. to the acre and where handy to railway or good roads, that it pays to mill. The bush generally will not average that.

A lot of the country is so rough and inaccessible that the small average quantity of timber over it would not pay millers. At the same time inquiries are occasionally being made for quantities worth the while and at all handy. The modern use of steam log-haulers enables millers to draw timber out of very rough places. The average working-capacity of the different mills from inquiries made seems to be about 700,000 superficial feet of all timbers per annum for each, but this total was not reached last year owing to the shortage of labour, and it is not possible to give the total output, as most of the timber cut was from privately owned land. The largest portion of the output here, probably 78 per cent., consists of rimu; of the rest about 15 per cent. kahikatea, with very small percentage of miro, matai, and totara.

It is probable that less than 30,000,000 ft. will exhaust most of what is considered as available on Crown land worth holding back for timber in this district. The probable duration of the supplies in the Taranaki District will be about ten or twelve years; after that only very small patches of native timber will be available.

It is not known that any timbers formerly rejected are coming into use to any great extent; pukatea is sometimes sawn up, but the supplies of such are very small.

In dry seasons fires keep nibbling into the green bush, and this helps to diminish the supply. It is possible that tawa could be utilized for some purposes, such as cases, &c.

The amount received as royalties during the past year is as follows: From timber cut on Crown land, £487; from timber cut on State forests, nil.

WELLINGTON.

(G. H. M. McClure, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

All reports received on the timber industry in this district describe it as being in a depressed condition, with little prospect of its improvement in the immediate future. As all speculative enterprise in building has come to a standstill owing to the adverse factors caused by the con-