

of £7,599 14s. 10d. This does not include rents and royalties deemed goldfields revenue under section 148 (a) of the Mining Act, 1908.

Prices realized for timber vary considerably, the following being about the average f.o.b. at Greymouth per 100 sup. ft. : Rimu—Clean heart, 19s. ; clean, 15s. ; ordinary building, 12s. White-pine 12 in. and over, 21s. ; smaller size, 14s. 6d. ; white-pine (seconds), 16s.

No very definite estimate can be arrived at in respect of the total quantity of accessible timber of commercial value in the district, but from reports furnished I should say that the output for the past year could be maintained for about forty years. The requirements of other districts, combined with facilities for export by rail, and removal of war difficulties will no doubt tend to greatly increase the output, and probably reduce the period to thirty years or even less.

Of the timbers formerly little used, brown-birch (*Fagus fusca*) is principally required for mining and bridge work ; silver-pine is in good demand, chiefly for sleepers, but is getting more difficult to obtain.

Millers have been able to dispose of a class of timber to Australia known in the trade as “ shorts ” and “ rough,” for which there is little demand in New Zealand, and as a good deal of this timber is obtained from the top of the tree where the branches have been cut off the bush is now being worked out in a very clean and satisfactory manner.

No forest areas have been destroyed by fires during the past year, and, indeed bush fires give practically no trouble in this district, which for this reason, combined with its mild moist climate and comparative freedom from high winds, appears to possess special advantages for the growth of timber, and should prove an attractive field for experiments in afforestation.

OTAGO.

ROBERT SADD, Conservator of State Forests (Commissioner of Crown Lands).

In reply to yours of the 11th ultimo, I forward herewith copy of a report from Ranger O'Neill embodying most of the information desired.

There is no practical difference in the position of the timber trade since last year. The mills are working as busily as the supply of labour will permit. They are, generally speaking, still short-handed, though the position is not so acute in this respect as it was last year. There seems to be plenty of demand for the output.

There are altogether nine mills of varying sizes working in Otago, and the output for the past year would be about 6,000,000 sup. ft. The possible output is much more than this, and no doubt as labour becomes plentiful this total will be increased by at least 25 per cent. The following are the approximate totals of each class milled : Red-pine (rimu), 3,000,000 ft. ; black-pine (matai), 250,000 ft. ; white-pine (kahikatea), 150,000 ft. ; miro, 500,000 ft. ; totara, 100,000 ft. ; beech, 2,000,000 ft. In the mixed forests of Otago red-pine is perhaps the chief timber, and, being much in demand, always occupies the most prominent place in the output. Beech and miro come next in order of quantity and, consequently, next in output. White-pine and totara are getting very scarce, and hence their totals are comparatively small.

The supply of timber in Otago should last for many years yet, though an increase in the export trade to Australia would reduce the time to some extent. As the most accessible forest is naturally attacked first, these easy reached areas are at present supplying the demand. The beech forests in Otago are getting considerably more attention than they got for years past, and beech timber is gradually being more and more drawn upon than it used to be.

There has not been any milling-forest destroyed by fire during the year.

No doubt a fairly large trade is being done with Australia in the timber line, and the output of much of our forest land is going overseas. In view of the absolute necessity of being able to produce sufficient timber for local requirements, it would seem to be a bad policy to permit of much export.

The royalties and rents received were as follows : From State forests, £130 ; from national-endowment lands, nil ; from Crown lands, £259.

The net wholesale prices of timber are as follows : Red-pine and beech, $\frac{1}{2}$ in. and under, 12s. to 15s. per 100, according to width ; over $\frac{1}{2}$ in. and up to 12 in. wide, 16s. to 24s. per 100 ; sizes under 3 in. by 1 in., 17s. per 100 ; weatherboards, 8 in. by $\frac{3}{4}$ in., 17s. 6d. per 100. ; extra widths and lengths, over 20 ft. and up to 30 ft., 1s. extra per 100 per foot. ; 12 in. wide and up to 20 in., 1s. per 100 per inch. Black-pine, up to 8 in., 20s. to 27s. per 100 ft. ; over 8 in. and up to 12 in. wide, 1s. per 100 per inch extra ; T. and G. flooring, 31s. per 100 ft. Totara, up to 8 in., 24s. 6d. to 31s. per 100 ft. ; over 16 ft. long and up to 20 ft., 1s. per 100 per foot extra ; over 8 in. wide and up to 12 in., 1s. per 100 per inch extra.

SOUTHLAND.

THOMAS BROOK, Conservator of State Forests (Commissioner of Crown Lands).

The general conditions with regard to the above industry in Southland for the year ended 31st March, 1919, were practically the same as last year. The output of rimu was less, while kahikatea, beech, totara, and matai were slightly more ; but, taking the total, the production for this year was just 250,000 ft. over last.

There were thirty-seven out of fifty-one mills worked more or less quarter-time during the year, chiefly owing to shortage of labour.