

ranges from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per 100 sup. ft., and the retail price realized for the sawn product is about 17s. 6d. per 100 sup. ft. It may be of importance to note that the principal sawmills are also engaged in cutting *Pinus radiata*, and large stocks of the better class of this timber are now being seasoned for prospective export to Australia for building, the off-cuts being converted into box-timber.

Forest Fires.—Notwithstanding the exceptionally long spell of dry weather experienced during the past summer, the kauri forests have been immune from fires, with the exception of one fire penetrating on to Crown lands on the lower end of the Waipoua State Forest and scorching about 240,000 ft. of kauri timber. This fire was the result of settlers burning off on their leasehold sections adjoining the forest reserve, and was started by them notwithstanding the repeated warnings given both by this office and the caretakers of the danger of the fire spreading into the kauri forest.

Timber-measuring.—Two timber-measuring parties were engaged during the whole of the year, and two additional parties during part of the year. The total quantity of milling-timber measured was 26,882,818 sup. ft., at a cost, including line-cutting, of 1·05d. per 100 sup. ft.

Timber-sales.—The following table shows in superficial feet the various kinds of timber disposed of during the year ended 31st March, 1919 :—

—	Kauri.	Rimu.	Kahikatea.	Totara.	Matai.	Miscellaneous.	Total.
Crown lands and lands for settlement	283,522	327,713	103,741	129,115	63,685	486,929	1,394,705
Education reserves ..	90,174	10,000	22,000	..	..	..	122,174
State forests ..	..	127,832	59,921	2,000	..	8,165	197,918

Timber-floating Licenses.—New licenses granted and licenses renewed, 92 ; lapsed, 13.

TARANAKI.

G. H. BULLARD, Conservator of State Forests (Commissioner of Crown Lands).

In the southern part of the Taranaki Land District milling at present is almost at a standstill, the requirements of the district being met mostly from mills near the Main Trunk line. Two small mills are at work, but neither of them constantly so, owing to the difficulty of obtaining experienced labour, and for that reason and the rough nature of the country worked in their output is only small at present. In the northern end of the district six mills are now operating, and two more are in the course of construction. There is plenty of demand for all timber.

The present output would amount to approximately 11,000,000 ft. annually, made up of about 5,000,000 ft. of kahikatea and 6,000,000 ft. of rimu, matai, and totara—the two last in small quantity only.

Royalties and rents received are—(a) from State forests, £64 15s. 11d. ; (b) sales of timber from national-endowment lands, £1,273 0s. 7d. ; (c) licenses and sales, £276 4s. 3d.

In the southern end of the district milling in a small way may last for another twelve years. In the northern end the present mills will cut out much sooner, but as soon as the Stratford-Okahukura Railway reaches Ohura the milling of about 90,000,000 ft. of timber on the Waitaanga Plateau, between Ohura and the coast, will come under consideration. Access to this will be costly, but the amount of timber will justify the expenditure. On Crown and private land near Tahora, the present railhead of the line from Stratford, there are perhaps 30,000,000 ft. available for milling. A mill is at work on some of this now, but a tram-line for about six miles will be needed to tap the larger part.

So far there is little or no increased utilization of timbers formerly little used.

No forest has been destroyed by fire during the year.

With reference to timber matters generally, I gather from Crown Lands Rangers Meredith and Sheehy's reports that rimu forms the bulk of the milling-timber in this district, and has to be worked out of rougher country than previously. The protection of forests is becoming more difficult as the land adjacent is settled. Trespassers should be severely dealt with, but to obtain convictions and keep them out of forests an army of Rangers would be needed. Many of the public seem to take it for granted that forests are preserved for the purpose of providing winter grazing for their stock, and hunting and shooting grounds for them and their families. The danger from fire is not so great where the State forest is surrounded by green bush, but where fern land adjoins, each successive fern fire eats a little farther into the green bush. The dry timber left after road-formation is another source of danger, and planting fringes of quick-growing evergreens would seem to be one way of preserving our State forests.

The wholesale prices of timber per 100 sup. ft. in the yard at New Plymouth are as follows : Rimu—O.B. scantling, 23s. ; boards and planks, to 9 in. wide, 24s. ; clean O.B. planks and boards, to 9 in. wide, 26s. ; building heart, scantling size, 28s. ; heart boards and planks, up to 9 in. wide, 31s. ; dressing heart, up to 9 in. wide, 37s. ; clean heart for joinery, up to 9 in. wide, 45s. Totara—building heart, 50s.

HAWKE'S BAY.

W. F. MARSH, Conservator of State Forests (Commissioner of Crown Lands).

General Condition of the Timber Industry.—With regard to that portion of the Hawke's Bay District extending from Mohaka in the north to Woodville in the south, the milling-timber is practically