

purposes. Public works of various kinds are being also delayed by the impossibility of securing needed supplies, and efforts have been made to secure arrangements that would ensure a reasonably adequate supply of timber for such purposes, but without success. Discharged-soldier settlers have shared with the rest of the community in having their works, such as the erection of buildings, cow-sheds, and fencing, delayed, at times under circumstances which hampered them considerably in the initial stages of their enterprise. Owing to almost all merchants finding it impossible to build up stocks, there is a great shortage of seasoned timber for joinery and similar purposes.

A number of small mills have been started owing to the great demand for timber, but have not very greatly helped to meet the abnormal demand.

Prices have continued to rise, the last increase having been sanctioned by the Board of Trade; and, while the increasing prices have had no effect upon the demand, the result has been a substantial addition to the cost of building, which has further checked the erection of houses, except for sale.

There has been a satisfactory absence of fires in forests during the year, no serious fires having been reported.

During the year three measuring parties have been engaged practically the whole of their time in the Rangitoto-Tuhua No. 9 Block, near Ongarue, the block comprising about 12,000 acres, which is estimated to average about 10,000 ft. per acre. The quantity of timber measured was 34,080,593 ft., at a cost of £1,294 4s. 7d., averaging slightly under 1d. per 100 ft.

The amounts received on account of royalties and for extensions of time were: For State forests, £76 8s. 1d.; from Crown lands, £1,103 10s. 7d.; from lands for settlement, £22 12s. 6d.; and from national-endowment lands, £1,680 19s. 7d.: being a total of £2,883 10s. 9d.

HAWKE'S BAY.

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

In the northern (Gisborne) end of the district the conditions of the timber industry are very good, and owing to the extra post-war demands for timber the millers have great difficulty in filling orders.

There are five mills working in the northern district—one at Matawai, three at Motuhora, and one at Te Karaka. The output from the log of each kind of timber during the past year is as follows, in superficial feet: Rimu, 5,125,497; matai, 102,528; white-pine, 2,143,727; totara, 12,288; birch, 2,727: total, 7,386,767 sup. ft.

The net wholesale prices charged by timber-merchants in the large centres really require further explanation. The prices were raised on the 1st October, 1919, on the 6th March, 1920, and again on the 1st August, 1920. The millers' price on trucks or skids at the mill from the 6th March to the 1st August, 1920, was—For O.B. rimu and matai (average), 17s. 9d.: rimu—building heart, 21s. 8d.; dressing heart, 29s.; selected heart, 35s.: matai—building heart, 23s. 6d.; dressing heart, 31s.: no fixed price for white-pine or totara. The millers allow the merchants 10 per cent. discount on the above prices, but from the 1st August have raised the price another 2s. per 100 sup. ft. on O.B. and 2s. 6d. per 100 on other timber. Up to the 1st August the timber-merchants were charging 28s. 7d. for O.B. timber, 29s. 10d. for building heart, 42s. 6d. for clean heart, and 50s. for selected heart of rimu. The timber-merchants allow the builders $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. discount on these prices. From the 1st August the merchants have raised their prices another 2s. 3d. per 100 sup. ft. on O.B. and 2s. 9d. on other timber.

Approximate Duration of Supplies, &c.—This is a little difficult to estimate, as it is probable that a lot of broken country that would not be considered suitable for milling a few years ago will now be worked. If the price is sufficient to warrant the extra expenditure a lot of broken country with scattered trees will be milled, thus increasing the production. Under present conditions, however, the trade supplies may last another twelve years or thereabouts.

Timber formerly little used.—Tawa is a timber that might be used much more than it has been in the past, more especially for inside work and temporary buildings. A good deal, I believe, is being used in this manner at Tauranga and other Bay of Plenty centres. When exposed to weather it is probably equal to sappy O.B. rimu, and, although somewhat heavier, is quite equal to white-pine for tallow-casks and some other purposes of the kind.

Destruction by Fires.—No timber of any value has been destroyed by fires in this district during the year.

With respect to the southern end of the Hawke's Bay District, there are four mills at present operating—viz., at Puketitiri, Patoka, Ongaonga, and Tangarewa—the two latter being small plants. There is an increased use in the production and use of willow, poplar, and *Pinus insignis*. So far as this part of the district is concerned, the trade supplies will probably not last more than another three years or thereabouts.

The revenue from licenses and sales of timber from Crown lands amounted to £52.

As there is apparently going to be a great shortage of milling-timber in a few years' time, the most use should be made of all the native timbers, as with the most energetic afforestation policy it will take many years to grow sufficient timber to meet requirements.

TARANAKI.

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

I beg to report as follows:—

In this district the bulk of the sawmilling is done in the northern end of the district. Eight mills are operating in the northern end, and about five in the central and southern end of the district. The approximate output would run into about 13,000,000 ft., about half being kahikatea, and the rest chiefly rimu. I have left out one mill with an output of about 5,500,000 ft., as its timber is mostly drawn from the Auckland Land District. Small plants are being put in from time to time to work any area of timber worth while and within a few miles of a railway. A large proportion of the output of the smaller mills is sold to the larger ones for further working up.