

WESTLAND.

R. S. GALBRAITH, Conservator of State Forests (Commissioner of Crown Lands).

As anticipated in last annual report, the output of sawn timber for the twelve months ending 31st March, 1920, shows a considerable increase, being 48,202,000 sup. ft., or 8,061,900 ft. over the previous year: this is mainly due to more labour being available owing to the return of men from the late war.

About 85 per cent. of this output was rimu, the balance being mostly white-pine, with a small quantity of brown-birch (*Fagus fusca*). About 15,000,000 ft. of the total cut has been taken off freehold and 33,190,300 off Crown and endowment lands. Shipping facilities have been satisfactory, and although at times, owing to scarcity of boats, millers had very large stocks on hand, I believe no mill had actually to stop cutting for lack of storage space, and at the close of the year stocks on hand would not exceed 3,000,000 ft.

The sawmilling industry in Westland is generally in a very flourishing condition; the demand for timber exceeds the supply, and if labour were available to fully man all the mills the output could be increased by probably 20,000,000 ft. yearly. There are forty-four mills, five of which are not working at present; besides these, two large mills have just been completed, and several small mills are in course of erection.

Only one sawmill area and reservation has been so far taken up in State forest in Westland—viz., 630 acres in the Kanieri Survey District, near Rimu. This has been recently granted to a company of discharged soldiers, but they have not yet started cutting operations. Until the Proclamation of the provisional State forest areas in May last this was the only State forest in the land district. These provisional State forest areas at present include nearly the whole of the Crown lands in Westland, and it is anticipated that most of the national-endowment lands will shortly be similarly proclaimed.

There has been an unprecedented demand for timber areas during the past year, some 40,000 acres having been taken up under the Mining Act, most of this area being first-class bush which would yield some 20,000 sup. ft. per acre.

Some bush lands supposed to have been cut out years ago are also being taken up again by small parties, much smaller timber being now cut than would formerly have been considered profitable.

Exclusive of those deemed to be goldfields revenue under section 148 (a) of the Mining Act, the following rents and royalties have been received (they are not, however, paid to State Forest Account): From national-endowment land, £8,365 0s. 3d.; from Crown lands, £49 16s. 5d.; from other endowments, £3 12s. 6d.: total, £8,418 9s. 2d.

Prices obtained for timber show a considerable rise from last year, the following being realized f.o.b. at Greymouth: Rimu—clean heart, 24s.; clean, 18s.; ordinary building, 14s. White-pine—12 in. and over, 23s. 6d.; under 12 in., 22s. 6d.; seconds, 17s. 6d.; seconds for fruit-cases, 15s.

Any estimate as to the length of time that the millable timber in the district will last is necessarily only a very rough one, as there are no very definite data to go by; but I consider that at the present rate of output there will be enough accessible timber for from thirty to forty years.

During the past year no milling-bush has been destroyed by fire in this district.

The only timber formerly considered of little use for which the demand is increasing is brown-birch (*Fagus fusca*), which is chiefly used for bridge-work and in connection with mining. Silver-pine is becoming scarce, though always in good demand for sleepers, posts, &c.

CANTERBURY.

H. D. M. HASZARD, Conservator of State Forests (Commissioner of Crown Lands).

The Conservator of Canterbury reports that he has nothing to add to his report of last year.

From a price-list supplied it is seen that the merchants' price of timber at Christchurch is: For rimu and white-pine—unseasoned O.B. up to 8 in. wide, 29s.; up to 10 in. wide, 35s. 9d; for black-pine—clean heart up to 8 in. wide, 54s. 6d; for totara—clean heart up to 12 in., 59s. 6d.; for New Zealand beech (birch) up to 8 in., 40s.; for *Pinus insignis*, 25s.—all at per 100 sup. ft.

The amount received as rent from State forests during the year was £510 12s. 8d.

OTAGO.

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

The timber industry in Otago is in a flourishing condition. The demand is much greater than the supply, and builders generally find it difficult to get sufficient timber from the mills. The labour-supply is still short, though not perhaps so bad as it had been during the previous two or three years. The shortage of railway trucks has hampered the industry to some extent.

There are eight mills working steadily, and two or three others about to start. The total output last year would be about 7,000,000 sup. ft., but the possible output with plenty of labour would be much more. The different classes of timber milled would be approximately as follows: Rimu, 3,500,000; miro, 1,500,000; matai, 200,000; totara, 50,000; kahikatea, 200,000; birch, 1,450,000.

In Otago the bush, with rare exceptions, is mixed; but rimu and miro are the most plentiful generally. Birch is next in order of quantity, and as a timber for general purposes it is coming more into demand as time goes on. Totara and kahikatea (white-pine) are becoming scarcer every day.

The amounts received as timber royalties and rents were as follows: Crown lands, £246 14s. 3d.; national-endowment lands, nil; State forests, £130 14s. 5d.