

So far as the remainder of the Wellington, Taranaki, and Hawke's Bay Province is concerned, it appears from evidence already quoted that the demand for building purposes has decreased during the past six months. This would tend to explain the decreased sales and railages from the Main Trunk timber area.

In Wellington City, cedar and redwood weatherboarding has in recent months been sold at from 40s. to 42s. per 100 sup. ft. These timbers for that purpose compete directly with heart matai weatherboards, which are sold ex truck Wellington at about 51s. per 100 sup. ft. Rough merchantable Douglas fir in scantling sizes and flats is sold ex wharf Wellington at about 22s. per 100 sup. ft., and at 25s. ex merchants' yards. This timber competes with scantling sizes, boards, and planks of O.B. rimu framing quality listed at about 19s. 6d. to 23s. 6d. ex trucks Wellington and from 23s. to 26s. ex yard Wellington.

Douglas fir common is sold ex wharf Wellington at 19s. to 20s. per 100 ft., and ex yard at 22s. This timber displaces (a) white-pine, seconds quality, which is sold on trucks Wellington at 19s. 6d., and (b) second-class O.B. rimu and matai, which range between 19s. and 23s. ex trucks Wellington.

Dressed Douglas fir lining (clear and better) is sold at 26s. ex wharf and 28s. 6d. ex yards Wellington in competition with O.B. rimu match-lining which is sold at 27s. ex trucks Wellington and at 34s. ex yard.

Dressed Douglas fir flooring is quoted ex wharf at 28s. 6d. flat grain and 30s. 6d. edge grain; ex yard the prices are 32s. 6d. and 35s. 6d. respectively. For the construction of certain floors Douglas fir is allowed to be used, and competes with heart-matai flooring quoted at 51s. ex trucks and from 56s. to 58s. ex yard Wellington.

The marked increase in the importations of cedar and redwood during the past two years has apparently been due to the acceptance of this timber in lieu of local heart timbers for external construction of houses. The margin between the prices of the imported and the local timbers is considerable. Redwood now shows a distinct tendency to displace cedar, principally by reason of its lower landed cost.

Rough-sawn Douglas fir has for years past been in competition with local timbers and continues to find extensive use for scantlings and in the construction of commercial buildings, both as concrete-boxing and in large sizes and long lengths. There has been only a slight increase during the past year in the imports into the Wellington area of this class of timber. Dressed Douglas fir, however, shows a substantial increase due to its use as flooring for which purpose it is appreciably cheaper than the local heart flooring. This timber is also imported to a considerable extent for lining and ceiling, though the difference in price between the competitive local and imported timbers is not nearly so marked as in the case of flooring.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that the Wellington importations have in recent years included certain varieties of timber for use in the local manufacture of petrol and kerosene cases. The importations under this heading for the past two years have been as follows :—

| Year ended March, | Hemlock.  | Spruce.  | Other Kinds. | Total.    |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|--------------|-----------|
|                   | Sup. ft.  | Sup. ft. | Sup. ft.     | Sup. ft.  |
| 1926 .. ..        | 905,000   | ..       | 1,833,000    | 2,738,000 |
| 1927 .. ..        | 1,180,000 | 200,000  | 1,642,000    | 3,022,000 |

It will be seen that these oil cases largely account for the importations of hemlock during the past two years. As no timber was imported for this special purpose in 1924–25, the above-mentioned quantities account for an appreciable proportion of the increase in the import figures for 1925–26 and 1926–27 as compared with earlier years.

The importations into the Wellington area have also included a considerable quantity of timber used for the manufacture of butter boxes, cheese crates, and fruit cases. The quantity imported for these purposes during the year ended 31st March, 1926, is estimated at 2,000,000 sup. ft., as compared with 1,000,000 sup. ft. in the past year.

The quantity of timber (other than Australian hardwood) imported into the ports of Lyttelton and Timaru has varied as follows :—

| Year ended 31st March, | Sup. ft.  |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 1923 .. ..             | 1,232,000 |
| 1924 .. ..             | 2,027,000 |
| 1925 .. ..             | 2,181,000 |
| 1926 .. ..             | 3,473,000 |
| 1927 .. ..             | 2,894,000 |

The imports during the past year, though greater than in 1924–25, have fallen by over half a million superficial feet as compared with 1925–26. The importations into this area consist mainly of Douglas fir (both rough-sawn and dressed) and redwood. Cedar and hemlock have not been imported otherwise than in relatively small quantities.

The quantity of Westland timber railed into Canterbury during the past three years has been 39,928,000 sup. ft. in 1924–25, 36,040,000 in 1925–26, and 33,425,000 in 1926–27. On the average of the past three years, therefore, imports have represented approximately 7 per cent. of the timber purchases of the Canterbury Province. As will be seen in the case of the Otago and Southland District, increased importation into Canterbury since the 31st March, 1926, cannot have contributed to the