

The trend of regional timber-production for the period 1886 to 1928 is shown in the accompanying graph. Auckland and Rotorua Regions, combined with Gisborne (*i.e.*, Auckland Province), maintained the premier position, although decreasing 11.9 per cent. in cut compared with 1927. The positions of the other provinces remained the same as last year, but it is to be noted that Wellington again decreased proportionately more than the other major provinces, and that Southland now almost rivals it in timber-production. The latter province, indeed, produced more timber than during the boom year 1926; but this factor denotes a building-up of stock rather than any increase in sales.

With the exception of insignis pine, which reported a slight increase, the production of all species for the year ended 31st March, 1928, was less than that for the preceding period. Rimu again reported the largest absolute decrease, amounting to 15 million feet b.m., although this amounted to only an 8-per-cent. decrease in the cut of the species. The largest proportional decrease was in totara, with a reduced cut of 3½ million feet b.m., or 25 per cent. of its previous production.

The average f.o.r. mill value per 100 ft. b.m. (all species) for the year ended 31st March, 1928, was 18s., compared with 19s. 2d. for the preceding year, and represents a decrease in value of over 2s. per 100 ft. b.m. on 1921-25 returns.

2. MANUFACTURING TECHNIQUE.

In the field of logging and sawing, manufacturing technique showed little improvement. Accumulated stocks from previous years of over-production, the necessity for curtailing current production, and the prevalence of price-cutting have all combined to curtail monetary returns to the millers, with a consequent lack of capital available for improved machinery or equipment.

Methods of conditioning and merchandizing timber, however, continue to steadily improve. Millers are appreciative of the air-seasoning practices recommended by the Service, and their keen interest is apparent in the manner in which they have allowed the Service to carry out air-seasoning studies at their mills and to erect model piles. Insanitary yards, poor drainage, and low foundations still remain, and represent the most serious defects in the present methods of seasoning timber. Further progress has been made in artificial seasoning, and an operator who installed the only modern scientifically controlled kiln in New Zealand expresses complete satisfaction with the results obtained, as a steady increase in trade has resulted.

Marketing of timber was also investigated, and grading and classification rules were developed to improve the standard and conditions under which native timbers are cut and marketed. It is considered that these new rules will place native timbers in more equal competition with the imported product.

3. EXPORTS.

The export trade in timber for the year ended 31st December, 1928, was the lowest since statistics have been collected, and in totalling only 35,029,000 ft. b.m., valued at £377,480, represented a decrease in quantity of approximately 2 million feet b.m. and in value of £49,000 compared with the preceding year.

In accordance with decreased exports and overstocked yards, competition for orders was keener, and all-round decreases in values were reported.

TABLE 12.

EXPORTS OF SAWN TIMBER AND OTHER FOREST-PRODUCE.

(From information supplied by the Comptroller of Customs. All figures refer to the years ended 31st December, 1926-28.)

Item.	1926.		1927.		1928.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
	Ft. b.m.	£	Ft. b.m.	£	Ft. b.m.	£
White-pine	31,768,000	356,860	27,802,000	289,980	25,439,000	262,390
Rimu	4,008,000	35,840	3,841,000	36,180	4,867,000	42,290
Beech	2,393,000	33,100	2,581,000	37,330	2,246,000	29,780
Kauri	1,987,000	46,320	2,476,000	57,090	1,670,000	35,700
Other (New Zealand) ..	310,000	3,510	464,000	4,870	750,000	6,850
Other (foreign)	1,488,000	14,620	17,000	480	57,000	470
Totals	41,954,000	490,250	37,181,000	425,930	35,029,000	377,480
	Tons.	£	Tons.	£	Tons.	£
Kauri-gum	4,877	332,770	4,674	298,630	4,394	240,140
Tanning-bark	99	1,130	38	650	43	580
Fungus	87	11,250	141	20,310	12	1,270

Only 1,670,000 ft. b.m. of kauri, valued at 42s. 9d. per 100 ft. b.m., was exported during the year, compared with 2,476,000 ft. b.m., valued at 46s. 1d. per 100 ft. b.m., during the previous year. The high price of this species debars it from any but special and luxury uses, and no considerable trade in the species can be expected.