

year, and has held frequent meetings. Its main business has been devoted to the devising of a new set of grading and classification rules, as well as definitions of minimum and maximum defects in timber. This classification of domestic timber was specially desired as a basis for the purchase of the timber requirements of the State, and as a basis of uniformity in timber specifications for all buildings constructed out of loan-moneys advanced by Government Departments. Furthermore, it was considered that by the adoption of a new system of timber classification and grading it would materially help the local industry in making possible a wider use of New Zealand timbers. The work has been one of considerable magnitude, as the Committee desired, if possible, to make the scheme national in its operations, and to gain the good will of those engaged in the distribution and use of timber. The Committee has in view the grading and classification of timber for export markets, and it is pleasing to record that in one of our main markets—Australia—considerable interest has been shown in the new scheme, and that it is generally conceded that if timber can be purchased on grade, properly cut and seasoned, it will place the Dominion in a better competitive position, and ensure a wider and more stabilized market. As the new classification and grading rules have been printed and issued to interested parties, it is not proposed to incorporate them in this report. It is satisfactory to report that the scheme has commended itself to a large majority of the sawmillers throughout the Dominion, and that the Right Hon. the Prime Minister has issued instructions on behalf of the Government to all State Departments concerned to give preference wherever possible to New Zealand timbers in all future orders for supplies, and that the classes and grades used are to be those defined under the classification and grading rules. To those Departments responsible for the issue of loan-moneys the Right Hon. the Prime Minister has instructed that all applicants for loans are to be notified—(a) That the use of New Zealand timber, all things being equal, is preferred as a matter of State policy; (b) that it will facilitate the granting of loan-money if domestic timber is used which meets the Valuation Department's requirements; and (c) that the classes and grades of New Zealand timber suitable for constructions on which loan-moneys are advanced shall conform to those recently drawn up by the special Timber Committee for Government requirements.

In an endeavour to secure the co-operation and support of the municipalities towards the new grading and classification rules, the Mayors and expert officers connected with the City Councils in the four chief centres have been approached. The system has been fully explained, and it is satisfactory to report that it was well received and the principle generally endorsed. Negotiations are continuing, and it is felt, when the advantages of the new scheme are thoroughly understood, that the local bodies will follow the lead of the Government. Negotiations are also pending with the New Zealand Timber-merchants' Federation, the New Zealand Builders' Association, and with the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

So far as the sawmillers' federations are concerned, steps have already been taken to cut and grade the timbers required, and the success or failure of the new scheme will, it is felt, largely depend upon the service given by the sawmillers. The sawmillers have expressed the opinion that the adoption of uniform and definite grading and classification rules is probably the biggest step forward yet undertaken to place the industry on a permanently improved footing, but it must necessarily take some little time before the benefits of the new system will be thoroughly understood and appreciated by timber-users. After all, New Zealand is simply following the lead of other countries engaged in the production of timber for domestic and export markets. No doubt it will be most difficult in some localities to break down the practice of years and change over from the old classifications, which were mainly local or provincial in application, but it must eventually prove to be a great national gain that timber may soon be procurable from mills from any part of the Dominion which will conform to standards, specifications, and grades laid down by the special Timber Committee.

The Committee will continue to function throughout the present year with a view to rendering further assistance to the industry. Consideration will shortly be given to the advisability or otherwise of setting up an advertising campaign on behalf of New Zealand timber, especially to emphasize its beauty and its wide utility for local use. Consideration will also be given to the institution of better efficiency in the mills, and a special study made of existing marketing methods.

Production of Timber.

The production of the main varieties of timber in the Dominion for the last eight years (as at 31st March) is given in the following table:—

Year ended 31st March,	Total.	Kauri.	Rimu.	White-pine.	Matai.	Totara.	Others.
	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.	Sup. ft.
1921 ..	307,667,834	20,393,788	153,529,022	73,168,750	21,329,043	17,984,189	21,263,042
1922 ..	314,972,310	21,435,728	157,345,928	68,486,633	24,830,368	19,570,561	23,303,092
1923 ..	304,351,877	22,460,759	155,627,936	66,088,219	23,747,049	20,843,718	15,584,196
1924 ..	317,069,216	19,743,196	181,093,581	56,699,443	24,326,148	18,904,361	16,302,487
1925 ..	344,094,874	22,891,535	195,572,705	65,572,439	23,947,707	18,509,551	17,600,937
1926 ..	353,224,196	22,765,877	195,451,758	75,634,869	26,141,027	14,109,576	19,121,089
1927 ..	305,675,258	18,474,981	170,498,282	65,490,059	19,380,469	14,179,462	17,652,005
1928 ..	269,783,000	15,874,000	156,314,000	53,736,000	15,207,000	15,728,000	17,924,000