

7. TIMBER SALES.

Although the figures recorded under this head last year showed, when compared with those for several previous years, that the sawmilling industry had completely recovered from the economic ills which afflicted it during the slump period, still further indications of improvement will be noticed by comparison with the figures shown hereunder. The number of sales and volume and value of timber sold during the year all show an appreciable increase, and it may be predicted with confidence that the existing keen demand for milling bush will continue until at least the present shortage of houses is overcome.

The demand for fencing timber—posts, stays, battens, &c.—and other classes of miscellaneous forest-produce, power-poles, house-blocks, sleepers, firewood, &c., still continues keen, and many bushmen have found employment in this way.

Relative statistics of timber sales for the past four years are—

Year.			Number of Sales.	Quantity sold.	Sale Price.
				Board Feet.	£
1932-33	..	..	51	32,314,954	35,633
1933-34	..	..	83	49,026,302	52,118
1934-35	..	..	117	65,302,700	71,243
1935-36	..	..	130	102,219,800	131,447

The quantity of timber cut from State forests, including Wardens' areas, was approximately 84,000,000 ft. board measure, or nearly 13,750,000 ft. greater than for the year 1934-35.

The volume of timber cut from all sources for the year is estimated to be 300,000,000 ft. board measure, so that 72 per cent. was cut from private and Native-owned forests and 28 per cent. from State forests.

8. WEST TAUPO TIMBER LANDS.

The regular patrol of these lands at the request of the Native and Lands and Survey Departments, as outlined in last year's report, was continued throughout the year. It is satisfactory to report that the vandalism and unauthorized cutting of timber hitherto prevalent in this remote forested country has been entirely suppressed.

CHAPTER II.—FOREST PROTECTION.

1. GENERAL.

The year under review has been climatically one of the most extraordinary of the recent decade at least. Widely distributed summer rains and bad weather occurred in most districts which normally suffer acute fire hazard, whilst Westland and Southland, the two conservancies with normally a minimum fire hazard, experienced very dry spring and summer weather, demanding intensified patrolling and vigilance. Auckland maintained its high rainfall of the previous year, and it is worthy of note that Waipoua State Forest for the third year in succession achieved the distinction of recording fewer hours of sunshine than any other meteorological recording-station in New Zealand. For the calendar year 1935, its total amounted to 1,487 hours only; whilst for the initial quarter of this calendar year it has shown sixty-seven hours fewer than for the corresponding quarter of 1935. In the fiscal year, therefore, as covered by this report, its sunshine-hours were but 1,420, a fact which, coupled with a rainfall of over 80 in., explains the complete absence of fire danger from that district; whilst at Puhipuhi on the eastern coast of the peninsula the even more remarkable rainfall of 114 in. guaranteed similar security. These factors of super-abundant rain distributed over the whole year, and minimum exposure to sunshine, are somewhat contrary to the popular conception of the climate of far-northern areas; and are here dwelt on at some length not only because of their relationship to fire hazard, but because of their suggestiveness as to the climatic tolerances, if they be not, indeed, the demands of kauri as a forest species. The continuous minimum sunshine record over a period of years may prove to be of great significance.