

*Timber.*—In reference to the timber industry, I append an extract from Ranger Smith's report, giving briefly the position during the year. Although a good many of the mills are not at work just now, I think this stoppage is caused by the formation of a West Coast Saw-millers' Association and a consequent advance in prices, and also, I understand, by overstocking of the East Coast markets. So soon as these stocks are reduced and buyers become accustomed to the advanced prices, mills will recommence operations. The advance, I understand, is only about 6d. per 100 feet, and even at the present rate the profits are limited. Previously, it seemed to me, the timber was practically given away, and our forests were becoming denuded without either the State, the sawmillers, or the employes getting much out of it.

In reference to timber-clearing, I would suggest that means be taken to replant any important reserves. As an example of this, I may refer to the reserve attached to the Hokitika Asylum and Gaol. All this block of 184 acres has been cleared principally for firewood purposes, and now it is lying utterly waste.

The land is of poor quality, fit only for timber-growing, and, were it again planted, an asset of considerable value would eventuate to the State. It seems to me that with such a number of inmates in these institutions sufficient labour would be available for this purpose, so that the first cost of seeds and tools would be the only expenditure.

D. BARRON,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

#### CROWN LANDS RANGER'S REPORT.

I have to report that during the year I have carried on a general supervision of timber-cutting throughout the Westland District, and have received returns from the sawmillers showing the amount of timber cut during each quarter.

The royalty due on timber cut is paid into the Warden's Courts, and it is part of my duty to inspect the receipts; in many cases it is not paid for months. I would suggest some power be given me to enforce the payments. The royalty from Crown lands is in a more satisfactory state; this I receive myself, and pay to the Receiver of Land Revenue at Hokitika.

Sleeper-cutting is still carried on, about thirty men being employed. Some of the bushmen are going in for post-cutting; this, I think, is a mistake and should not be allowed, as they use the small silver-pine. The outcome of this business means there will be none of this valuable timber left in a few years. I would propose that no silver-pine tree under 10in. should be cut in any case. This timber requires a great many years to mature, and in my opinion should be protected accordingly.

A great number of temporary grazing-leases have been granted, and operations commenced by clearing, fencing, and grassing. I have warned the lessees against the destruction of heavy timber which may be on their leases.

I have visited the deferred-payment and occupation-with-right-of-purchase holdings, and find the improvements done are well within the requirements of the Act, in many cases clearing being carried on to a large extent.

The mills during the last three months have not been working more than half-time. About one half of the timber exported from Greymouth is cut in the Westland District.

Of the seventeen mills working in this district, there are four which export timber cut from mining blocks, four from freehold, and two cut in the Nelson District; the remaining number supply the timber locally.

Attached is a statement showing the number of men employed and the amount cut during the year. In some cases the returns are small, the reason is that several mills are worked by three and four men, also time lost by bad weather during the last six months.

J. SMITH,  
Crown Land Ranger.

#### TIMBER CUT ON CROWN LANDS, NELSON.

Red-pine, 2,674,940ft., at 3d. per 100ft.; royalty, £334 7s. 4d.. Silver-pine, 243,847ft., at 6d.; royalty, £60 19s. 3d. Black-pine, 173,800ft., at 6d.; royalty, £43 9s. Total royalties, £438 15s. 7d.

#### TIMBER CUT ON MINING BLOCKS, NELSON.

Red-pine, 558,560ft.; royalty, £69 16s. 5d.. Silver-pine, 41,200ft.; royalty, £10 6s. Total royalties, £80 2s. 5d.

Royalties on above Crown lands have been collected by me, and paid to the Receiver of Land Revenue at Hokitika. Royalties on mining blocks have been reported by me to the Receivers of Gold Revenue.

Number of sleepers cut, 19,597; equal to 457,263ft.; value, £114 6s. 4d. Number of men employed, thirty.

#### TIMBER CUT ON GREY COAL RESERVE.

Red-pine, 453,000ft.; royalty, £56 12s. 6d. Silver-pine, 11,500ft.; royalty, £2 17s. 6d. Total royalties, £59 10s.

The money has been collected on Crown lands by me, and paid to the Receiver of Land Revenue at Hokitika. The money on coal reserve has been collected by me, less £23 10s.

#### TIMBER CUT ON CROWN LANDS, WESTLAND.

Red-pine, 307,961ft., at 3d. per 100ft.; royalty, £38 9s. 11d. Silver-pine, 432,847ft., at 6d.; royalty, £108 4s. 3d. Total royalties, £146 14s. 2d.

#### TIMBER CUT ON MINING BLOCKS, WESTLAND.

Blair and Stratford, 350,000ft. red-pine, at 3d. per 100ft., £43 15s.; Malfroy, 130,800ft., £16 7s.; Westland, 748,400ft., £93 11s.; Taminelli, 72,735ft., £9 1s. 11d.; Andrews, 18,600ft. silver-pine, at 6d. per 100ft., £4 13s.; McMullen, 25,336ft. silver-pine, £6 6s. 8d.; Morris, 1,071,117ft. red-pine, £133 17s. 10d.; 346,182ft. blocks, at 2d. per 100ft., £28 16s. 7½d.; 9,333ft.,