

TIMBER EXPORT.

The following table shows the gradual development of the export trade and its present position:—

Sawn and Hewn Timber.

						Superficial Feet.	Value. £
1871	...	...	...	...	...	3,214,742	14,200
1875	...	...	...	...	...	5,225,627	26,914
1881	...	...	...	...	...	13,180,280	65,119
1888	...	...	...	...	...	43,474,434	177,877
1889	...	...	...	...	...	42,568,600	176,608
1890	...	...	...	...	...	42,098,863	181,689
1891	...	...	...	...	...	42,824,365	182,431
1892	...	...	...	...	...	22,860,551	87,581
1893	...	...	...	...	...	26,718,046	101,082
1894	...	...	...	...	...	31,901,415	116,116
1895	...	...	...	...	...	38,297,905	141,892
1896	...	...	...	...	...	34,984,414	133,511

By far the greater portion of exported timber consists of kauri, the proportion of other timbers being almost insignificant. Thus, in 1887 the quantity of kauri exported was 30,230,084 ft. superficial, valued at £124,347, and of all other timbers 1,104,380 ft. superficial, valued at £4,475. The export of rimu and kahikatea is, however, increasing, though not very rapidly. Up till now the greater part has been shipped from the Bluff, but the recent completion of the Hokitika to Greymouth Railway will lead to considerable shipments from the latter port. Figured rimu, which is plentiful in the Westland forests, could be placed on the London market at a low price, either in selected board or in logs, and if shipments were regular would command a ready sale. The remarkable falling-off of the export trade in 1892 was caused, of course, by the terrible commercial depression that year throughout Australasia.

KAURI RESIN.

Gum-digging employs nearly seven thousand persons, including Maoris and aliens. In the fossil state it is found in lumps, varying in size from that of a walnut to 100 lb. weight. It is used in the manufacture of oil-varnishes, and is exported to England and the United States. In 1860 the export was only 1,046 tons, valued at £9 per ton. In 1894 it amounted to 8,338 tons, valued at £48 10s. per ton. The following statement, taken from the Customs returns, shows the quantity exported in each year from 1884 to 1894 with the total value and average per ton:—

				Quantity.	Total value. £	Average per ton. £ s. d.
1884	...	...	...	6,393	342,151	53 10 4
1885	...	...	...	5,875 $\frac{3}{4}$	299,762	51 0 3
1886	...	...	...	4,920 $\frac{3}{4}$	257,653	52 7 1
1887	...	...	...	6,790	362,434	53 7 6
1888	...	...	...	8,482	380,933	44 18 4
1889	...	...	...	7,519	329,590	43 16 8
1890	...	...	...	7,438	378,563	50 17 11
1891	...	...	...	8,388	437,056	52 2 1
1892	...	...	...	8,705	517,678	59 9 4
1893	...	...	...	8,317	510,775	61 8 3
1894	...	...	...	8,338	404,567	48 10 5
1895	...	...	...	7,425	418,766	56 7 11
1896	...	...	...	7,126	431,323	60 10 6

The digger's equipment is of a simple character. A gum-spear is used to test the ground, and when found beneath the surface the gum is dug out with a spade. The total area of the gum-fields is variously estimated at from 1,500,000 to 1,800,000 acres.

For statistics specially prepared for my use at the close of my tour through the colony by G. Mueller, Esq., Commissioner of Crown Lands, Auckland, see Appendix A, at end of report.

MINING TIMBER SUPPLIES.

In New Zealand the question of supplies of timber for mining purposes is not as yet a burning one, as in Victoria, inasmuch as mining in the first-named colony is chiefly confined to hydraulic sluicing, in connection with which the demand for timber is not great. On those fields, too, where timber is a matter of expense and difficulty, mining-pros may readily be grown at comparatively small cost. The blue-gum thrives in both North and South Islands, and no better tree could be selected for plantation in places where mining requirements are likely to be large and permanent. This question of permanency, I may mention in passing, is one of the greatest importance where State forests are concerned. Blue-gums can be grown to 8in., 10in., or 12in. props in a number of years equal to the diameter measurements—i.e., approximately, 1in. in diameter for each year. Under these circumstances, it is quite feasible for any company with spare land round their claim to grow blue-gums for their own use if native timber be not available. In large mining centres, of course, such private planting would not be sufficient, and Government should start plantations to keep up the necessary supply of timber.

So far as I was able to observe during my recent tour, mining as stated above is principally carried on by sluicing; but if at any time there is extensive demand for mining timber the *Eucalyptus* family will be found of great value, and has the special advantage of being a rapid