

their desire to limit participation in sawmilling to the extent of erecting and operating only demonstration and key mills such as these herein reviewed. At no time has it been visualized that Forest Service mills would ever produce in total more than 10 per cent. of the annual cut of indigenous and exotic timber, leaving to private enterprise the remaining 90 per cent. That private enterprise will rise to the occasion the Department is confident, believing that eventually the industry will appreciate that it has been saved many hundreds of thousands of pounds in undirected and unplanned experimentation and that departmental milling policy is as much in the industry's as the public interest. The Forest Service believes that it has made an unanswerable case for log classification and log-frame sawing in large mills wherever the forest resources are sufficiently large to maintain them, elsewhere in smaller mills, of which there will ultimately be quite a few, attached to the numerous small exotic forests already established or soon to be created in various timberless districts throughout the Dominion.

An adverse decision means—

- (a) Inferior timber at high prices:
- (b) Restricted domestic and export markets:
- (c) Stagnating exotic-forest resources:
- (d) No further forestation:
- (e) Languishing forest industries.

The Forest Service alternative means—

- (a) High-quality timber at low prices:
- (b) Large domestic and export markets:
- (c) Healthy, well-managed exotic-forest resources:
- (d) More forestation:
- (e) Strong and prosperous forest industries.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune."

CHAPTER IX. —TIMBER TRADE

70. *Production of Sawn Timber.*—The annual cut of sawn timber reported by the Government Statistician for the year ended 31st March, 1943, was 342,000,000 board feet (see Appendix VII), against an estimated figure of 350,000,000 board feet, the deficiency being due to a smaller accession of general and skilled personnel by release from the Armed Services than was anticipated. A production of 345,000,000 board feet for the year ended 31st March, 1944, is indicated by the last sawmill registrations, falling slightly below estimate owing to a further deterioration in the man-power situation. With the recent release, however, of a substantial number of men from the Pacific theatre of war for service in the timber industry, a material improvement in timber-production is assured, and an annual cut of 350,000,000 board feet is confidently anticipated for the year ending 31st March, 1945.

71. *Species cut.*—With the exception of kahikatea (or white-pine), in which the cut decreased by over 5,000,000 board feet to 24,357,000 board feet, production of all other important species was larger for the year ended 31st March, 1943, than during the previous year. A new peak was recorded for insignis pine, the production of which increased by over 11,000,000 board feet to 67,000,000 board feet. While the production of the building timbers—rimu, matai, and totara—as a group increased by over 8,000,000 board feet to 230,000,000 board feet, it should be noted that the total quantity actually available for building was lower owing to the enforced usage of rimu and matai for butter-boxes and cheese-crates in order to meet the deficiency in kahikatea supplies.

72. *Man-power.*—Despite constant efforts to effect an improvement, the shortage of man-power within the industry was a major problem throughout the year. In the early part of the period additional withdrawals for the Armed Forces and normal wastage caused serious concern, but return of the Forestry Units from Great Britain and of men from the Middle East, together with a number of releases from the Armed Forces within New Zealand, assisted materially in restoring the position during the last two or three months. A detailed man-power survey was made in September, 1943, to ascertain the requirements of sawmills in order to obtain the maximum possible production on a forty-eight-hour-week basis, as a result of which vacancies for 1,300 extra men were required, or approximately 25 per cent. of the existing complement, the survey also indicating that the acquisition of this number of extra workmen would give a still greater percentage increase in production.

The continued transfer of semi-skilled and inexperienced workers from other industries to replace men withdrawn from forest and mill operations for service overseas has thrown heavy responsibilities upon the remaining skilled personnel, but even this fact did not prevent production from being maintained at a high level, and every worker in the industry is entitled to great praise for such an outstanding effort. Unfortunately, this splendid performance could only be effected by deferring development work for future operations, and forward extension of trams and roads into new areas of bush will require extra labour in the coming years.

Training of workers to become skilled operatives has been another problem during the past year. The State Forest Service and the New Zealand Railways, in seeking a solution of their own problems, have commenced to furnish a limited number of selected men with tuition in saw-doctoring at the Waipa Mill. These men are being trained to undertake this work in various mills throughout the country, and it is hoped to extend the scheme later to cover a much wider field of sawmilling activities.