

TARANAKI.

The two mills on the Mokau River, owned by Messrs. A. Kelly and F. Baigent, have together exported about 1,250,000 superficial feet of kahikatea, the greater portion of the 550,000 superficial feet of rimu cut during the year being sent to Wellington, as there is very little local demand. The timber which supplies Baigent's mill is almost cut out, and a new mill is being erected at another place on the Mokau River for the same firm. No work has been done at Kelly's mill for some time. These mills ship the timber direct by small coastal steamers to Waitara.

At the Mangapehi Mill, owned by Messrs. Ellis and Burnand, which was fully described in report of 1905, an American locomotive has been imported for working on rough, steep grades, and is now in use. A large proportion of the timber cut is sent to Auckland, as there is not a great local demand. The firm have a sash and door factory at Hamilton employing about fifty hands, and also a larger mill and butter-box factory in the same neighbourhood. The mill at Tiroa has been closed down during the past year. The details of the output are—1,637,200 superficial feet rimu, 818,600 superficial feet matai, 1,227,900 superficial feet totara.

Mr. A. H. Hyde's sawmill at Matire is a portable one, and has been employed to meet the requirements of that newly settled district, in the erection of houses, and supplying timber for roadworks. The timber cut was 100,000 superficial feet rimu, 100,000 superficial feet kahikatea, and 50,000 superficial feet matai.

The mill at Ongarue is controlled by the Taumarunui Totara Company (Limited), with offices and yards at Frankton. About 166,000 superficial feet of the year's output consisted of totara; 43,000 superficial feet matai; the remaining 41,000 superficial feet being equally divided between rimu and kahikatea. What is not required locally is sent to Auckland and Wellington.

There are thirteen mills working round the base of Mount Egmont, viz.: Plymouth Road (Messrs. Ede and Co.), Newall Road (J. Ducker), Awatuna (Parkes and Brooker), Manaia Road (Clements), Egmont Road (New Plymouth Sash and Door Company), Carrington Road (Vickers and Davies), Oakura (Tuck and Pierson), Radnor Road (Quin's), Mountain Road (Henry Brown and Co.), Te Kiri and Rahotu (Opunake Timber Company), Rahotu (Rothery and Mills), and Tariki Road (Symons and Jones). The output was 4,142,581 superficial feet rimu, used principally for building timber locally, and 1,236,000 superficial feet kahikatea, which is devoted to the construction of butter-boxes. This was cut by six of the mills. Messrs. Henry Brown and Co. and the Sash and Door Factory and Timber Company (Limited) have extensive timber-yards in New Plymouth. Many of these mills have only worked for part of the year.

In the Ngairi and Huiroa Survey Districts the following nine mills have been cutting: Messrs. Derby Bros.' mills, at Toko and Huiroa; Clements' mill, at Anderson Road; the New Plymouth Sash and Door Company's mill, at Toko; G. Syme's mills, at Ngairi, Ohura Road, Huiroa and Toko Road; and Messrs. Henry Brown and Co.'s mill, at East Road. Their total output was 3,488,000 superficial feet rimu, and 1,229,000 superficial feet kahikatea, the latter cut by only six of these mills. G. Syme's mills cut 205,000 superficial feet matai also.

The mill at Everett Road, east of Inglewood, owned by Mr. Baigent, cut out 480,000 superficial feet rimu; and Mr. A. Meredith's mill at Brewer Road, near Strathmore, cut 50,000 superficial feet rimu, 2,000 superficial feet kahikatea, and 8,000 superficial feet matai.

It will be gathered from the foregoing particulars that the bulk of the timber cut, with the exception of the white-pine exported by the mills on the Mokau River and the timber cut by Messrs. Ellis and Burnand at Mangapehi, is used in the province for building-material, a great deal of it being sent to the timber-yards of the Sash and Door and Timber Companies in New Plymouth and Hawera, to be used for the building trade and all kinds of joinery.

The Eltham Butter-box Factory at Eltham; Messrs. Twigg and Co., Hawera; G. Syme, Hawera; the Sash and Door Factory; and Henry Brown and Co., at New Plymouth, take most of the white-pine for butter-boxes, this class of timber being well known as the best for the packing of butter for oversea transit.

By far the greater bulk of the milling timber in Taranaki lies around the western and south-western edge of the Mount Egmont National Park, roughly between sawmills Nos. 11 and 16 as shown on map at end of report. The quantity of milling timber here is estimated at 200,000,000 superficial feet of rimu and kahikatea. Unfortunately, owing to lack of railway and good road communication, and its distance from any centre where a demand for timber is likely to arise, the bulk of this great asset is doomed to be wasted and lost by ravages of fire and the settlers' axe. The projected railway from Eltham to Opunake will open up a market for a good portion of this timber, provided its construction is not unduly delayed.

Summarising the above return, it appears that there are twenty-nine mills in all, employing 453 men, with a total horse-power of machinery amounting to 737. The cutting-capacity of these mills is returned as 32,158,000 superficial feet per annum, while the actual output given by the various owners of mills for the twelve months amounts to 16,824,281 superficial feet, made up of the following classes and quantities: rimu, 10,467,781 superficial feet; kahikatea, 3,838,000 superficial feet; totara, 1,393,900 superficial feet; matai, 1,124,600 superficial feet: total, 16,824,281 superficial feet.