

a number of sawmills will be required to close down through exhaustion of supplies of white-pine. From inquiries made it has been ascertained that, with the exception of an additional one or two minor sawmills, the number of mills in operation in this district, and hands employed, and the output of sawn timber, are practically the same as last year's return.

Prices for sawn timber of various kinds, with the exception of kauri timber, have very considerably advanced, and no less than three successive rises in prices have taken place during the year, and a contemplated further advance has recently been reported. The following is a comparison of increase in prices in one line alone of heart timber in various kinds:—

April, 1917	...	...	...	...	Rimu.	Matai.	Totara.
April, 1918	...	...	...	...	28s.	25s.	29s.
	...	...	...	...	38s.	33s.	40s.

Attention is being given to the utilization of *Pinus radiata* for box-making, and there is now quite a demand for these trees growing within reach of the Waitemata Harbour.

The Forest Caretakers report that with the strict watch exercised the Crown kauri forests have been kept free from gum thieves and trespassers, and only on one or two occasions has there been any evidence of game-shooting taking place in these forests. All Crown forests have been immune from fires during the year.

The following table shows in superficial feet the various kinds of timber disposed of during the year ended 31st March, 1918:—

---	Kauri.	Rimu.	Kahikatea.	Totara.	Matai.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	Amount realized.	
								£	s. d.
Crown lands and lands for settlement	283,522	327,713	103,741	129,115	63,685	486,929	1,394,705	876	1 2
Education reserves ..	90,174	10,000	22,000	..	..	..	122,174	76	0 0
State forests ..	..	127,832	59,921	2,000	..	8,165	197,918	93	0 0
Totals ..	373,696	465,545	185,662	131,115	63,685	495,094	1,714,797	1,045	1 2

The total amounts received as timber royalties and for extensions of time for removal of timber during the year were as follows: Crown lands, £1,094 16s.; State forests, £5,284 18s.; national-endowment lands, £3,715 18s. 6d.; lands for settlement, £60 18s. 4d.: total, £10,156 10s. 10d.

Timber-floating Licenses.—Renewals were granted for ninety-nine licenses, and six new licenses issued.

Three parties of timber-measurers were engaged in measuring and inspecting timber, and the total quantities of all kinds of timber measured was about 26,911,523 sup. ft., at an average cost of 1·042d. per 100 sup. ft.

TARANAKI.

(G. H. Bullard, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Anything I can report is very much on the lines of last year's statement so far as this district is concerned. The general condition of the timber industry in Taranaki is good excepting for shortage of labour.

As far as I know, there are about seven small mills working in different parts of the district, five of which are drawing part of their supplies from Crown land. Another large mill is located in this land district, but the timber converted actually comes from the Auckland Land District. I estimate the output of timber at 3,500,000 ft.—rimu, 2,600,000 ft.; white-pine and totara, 300,000 ft.; matai, &c., only in small quantity.

The royalties and rents received at this office for the past year are as follows: State forests, £6 5s.; licenses and sales from national endowment, £1,306 19s. 11d.; licenses and sales from Crown lands, £796 9s. 1d.

The net wholesale prices per 100 sup. ft. for ordinary building and clean heart charged by timber-merchants in New Plymouth are as follows:—O.B. rimu (seasoned): Scantling, 21s. 6d.; boards and planks, 9 in. to 12 in. wide, 22s. 6d. to 23s. 6d.; clean O.B. planks and boards, 9 in. to 12 in. wide, 24s. 6d. to 25s. 6d.; rough lining, 20s. 6d. Heart rimu: Building heart scantling, 23s. 6d.; rough heart scantling, 19s. 6d.; dressing heart up to 9 in. wide, 32s. 6d.; dressing heart up to 12 in. wide, 41s. 6d.; clean heart for joinery, 9 in. to 12 in., 40s. 6d. to 41s. 6d. Totara: O.B. totara and scantling to 12 in. wide, 28s. 6d.; building heart, 40s. 6d.; dressing heart, 45s. 6d. White-pine: O.B. boards and scantling to 12 in. wide, 19s. 6d.; second class, 14s. 6d.; clean O.B., 21s. 6d.

I think ten years will see very little milling-timber left in these parts, but I am having a rough estimate made of the timber on about 4,000 acres in the Waro Survey District, and, if up to expectations, supplies there may last longer.

No fresh timbers are coming into use, but tawa may come in for box and case timber. No area has been destroyed by fire during the past year in Taranaki. I think the question of resuming some of the poorer land along the Main Trunk line, about such localities as Waimiha, for the purposes of State forestry should receive earnest attention from the Government. Much of the land in question is poor at the best for agriculture or grazing, but should do for forestry purposes, as being handy to a railway and consisting of country not very difficult to road for the purpose of working timber.