

On the whole, mainly owing to the supply giving out, and also in some measure to shortage of labour on account of war conditions, the industry has shown a decline during the past year.

In the Buller portion of the district there are seven mills in active operation, but two of these are likely to close down very shortly owing to scarcity of labour and shipping.

The principal timber being milled is rimu, and it is estimated that there is sufficient of this variety standing to keep the mills running at the present rate of consumption for close on thirty years. Kahikatea is very scarce, and is found only in small patches in the gullies. Black-pine and totara are also very scarce, but the supply of birch is very large on the mountain-slopes.

No milling is going on at Karamea, owing to the uncertain nature of the bar harbour. The output for the year, as far as can be ascertained, was—Rimu, 1,416,033 ft. on Crown lands and 723,471 ft. on private land; birch, 73,068 ft.

There were no bush-fires during the year, and the milling bush did not suffer any damage from that source of danger.

Summary.—General condition of sawmilling industry: Nelson, Reefton, Westport, declining.

Number of sawmills in active work, thirty-eight. Output during year: Rimu, 3,893,102 sup. ft.; birch, 762,144 sup. ft.; silver-pine, 6,244 sup. ft.; kaikawaka, 2,850 sup. ft.: total, 4,664,340 sup. ft.

Royalties, &c., received: From State forests, nil; from timber on Crown lands, £479; from timber on national-endowment lands, £941.

Wholesale prices, per 100 sup. ft., at present charged by merchants: Reefton and Buller—Rimu, 10s. to 20s.; kahikatea, 10s. to 20s.; totara, 30s. 6d.; matai, 26s. 6d.; birch, 18s.; silver-pine posts, 1s. 6d. each. Nelson—Rimu, 16s. to 20s.; kahikatea, 16s. to 20s.; totara, 32s. to 35s.; matai, 20s. to 27s.; birch, 16s. to 20s.; silver-pine, 32s. to 35s.

Approximate duration of present supplies of milling-timber now used: Nelson, five years; Reefton, fifteen years; Westport, thirty years.

Timber formerly rejected but now used: Birches.

Damage by fire: Nil.

CANTERBURY.

(W. H. Skinner, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Native Forests and Timber Matters.—The milling of native timbers, so far as this land district is concerned, is a thing of the past. There is only one sawmilling license in the whole of Canterbury, and that has not been in operation during the past twelve months owing to the indisposition of the licensee. Birch—or, to give the tree its proper name, beech (*Fagus Solandri*)—was extensively used both for dwellings and bridge-building, but the difficulty of access to the remaining forests of this timber has stopped all enterprise in this direction. Its place for bridge-construction has been taken by imported hardwoods, such as jarrah and ironbark, also by reinforced concrete, and in the erection of buildings by redwood, Oregon pine, and Baltic pine. Apart from the inaccessibility of the remaining forests, their destruction would be detrimental to the water-supply of the plains. The one mill mentioned will be active again this year, but its output when in full work does not exceed 1,200 sup. ft. per month.

The royalty received from timber cut on State forests for the year was £17 13s. 6d., and from Crown lands nil.

The present market prices for imported timber are as follows:—From other districts in New Zealand, per 100 sup. ft.: Red-pine (rimu)—Undressed, up to 12 in. wide, 25s. 3d.; over that size, 29s. to 34s.; dressed flooring, 30s. to 33s.; lining, 20s. to 26s.; weatherboards, 24s. 3d. to 29s. 6d.; 12 in. to 18 in., dressed, 30s. 6d. to 38s. (These prices show an increase since 1915 of over 15 per cent.) White-pine (kahikatea)—First-class dressed, according to widths demanded, 26s. 3d. to 32s. 9d.; second class, up to 12 in., 19s. 6d. (20 per cent. increase since 1915). Black-pine (matai)—All heart, up to 12 in., 48s. 6d. (an increase since 1915 of 20 per cent.); 4 in. by 1 in. flooring, 16s. Totara—All heart, up to 12 in., 48s. 6d. (increase since 1915, 60 per cent.); dressed veranda flooring, 4 in. by 1 in., 19s. Kauri—Fitch timber, 12 in. to 24 in. wide, all heart, 51s. 6d. to 63s. 6d.; rough, 12 in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to 18 in., 34s. 6d. to 39s. 6d.; dressed, for the same sizes, 39s. to 44s.: T. and G. flooring, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{7}{8}$ in., 52s. 6d.; $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 1 in., 55s.; $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 1 in., 54s. (increase since 1915, 16 per cent. to 20 per cent.). Local-grown timbers from exotic trees: *Eucalyptus globulus* (blue-gum), 3 in. by 1 in. and 4 in. by 1 in., 4 in. by 2 in., for gates, hurdles, studding, &c., 7s. to 10s. per 100 running feet. *Pinus radiata*—Weatherboards and scantlings—9 in. by 1 in., 3 in. by 2 in., 4 in. by 2 in., 14s. to 15s. per 100 sup. ft. These timbers are increasing in use. Imported hardwood: Jarrah, 45s. to 50s. (very scanty); ironbark—piles and posts, 3s. 6d. to 4s. per running foot. Tasmanian, 28s. per 100 sup. ft.; palings, 38s. per 100. Softwoods: Redwood, 45s.; yellow-pine, 48s.; and Baltic, 47s. per 100 sup. ft.

The supply of native timber being exhausted, *Pinus radiata* is used locally for building dwellings and sheds. The numerous plantations scattered all over the district contain matured trees which will provide the demand for many years, provided it becomes not too great. There are also many young plantations of *Pinus radiata* and *Pinus ponderosa*, which will mature in due course and afford a future small supply. These timbers are found to answer well if guarded from the vicissitudes of the weather, especially when painted with Stockholm tar. The gum plantations also provide a supply of hardwood for studding and rafters, gates, and hurdles. An estimate of these plantations available for timber has not yet been made.

The production of sawn timber (mainly *Pinus radiata* and blue-gum) from the plantations under the control of the Selwyn Plantation Board already amounts to a million feet, whilst many