

The prices of timber per 100 sup. ft. as fixed by the Southland and Otago Co-operative Timber Company are as follows: Red-pine,  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. and under, 11s. to 13s.; scantlings, 13s. 6d. to 16s.; heart, 8 in. to 12 in. wide, 18s. 6d. to 21s.; clean heart, 2s. 6d. per 100 ft. extra; weatherboards, 12s. to 19s.; T. and G., 16s. 6d. to 19s.; dressed— $\frac{1}{2}$  in. and under, 15s. to 17s. 6d.; over  $\frac{1}{2}$  in., 17s. 6d. to 20s. Black-pine (matai), up to 8 in., 18s. 6d. to 23s.; T. and G. flooring, 26s. 6d. Totara, up to 8 in., 23s.; up to 8 in., all heart, 29s. Beech for building, 1s. per 100 ft. less than red-pine; beech other than for building, same price as red-pine.

The royalties and rents received for the year ended 31st March, 1918, were as follows: State forests, £130 4s. 11d. Licenses and sales of timber from national-endowment lands, nil. Licenses and sales of timber from Crown lands, £249 0s. 3d.

At the present rate of output the timber-supplies in Otago should last from twenty to twenty-five years.

For many years the beech was not looked upon with much favour by Otago millers, but in later times it is being very freely used. The demand for it has largely increased, and the uses to which it is being put have multiplied.

There has not been any standing bush destroyed in Otago during the last year; in fact, it is very rare for the standing bush to take fire.

Efforts are being made to open up an extensive timber trade between the Bluff and Australian ports. Towards the end of the year one steamer sailed with 750,000 ft., and others are expected at regular periods during the early part of the coming year. This trade, if development is successful, is going to take away a considerable amount of our best timbers, much to our loss if we consider the future.

#### SOUTHLAND.

(H. D. M. Haszard, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Owing to the high cost of building-material, shortage of labour, &c., due to the war, the Southland sawmillers have generally experienced a trying year. The Marlborough Timber Company at Mussel Beach, Rowallan, has, however, in the face of it all, been busy in developing works, and have spent a large sum in equipment and providing facilities for shipping its timber. Fair progress has been made in construction of breakwater and wharf, machinery capable of shifting stone 24 tons in weight being employed. Several houses have already been built of a superior class to usual sawmill tenements, whilst a contract has, I believe, been let for building about two dozen more superior five-roomed cottages for married men, which will be provided with hot- and cold-water systems. A public hall is contemplated; also a school and recreation-ground is being provided for. This embryo township is all being laid out on systematic lines, and credit is due to the company for their forethought and enterprise, which is deserving of every success. They have already one small mill in operation, and are erecting a large mill with the idea of exporting their timber direct to Australia or elsewhere in their own steamers. Their system of log-haulage to the mill is mainly by a system of overhead cables, after the standing bush and scrub has been cut down, thus making a clean sweep of everything, which when burnt will ensure a good take of surface-sown grass, the land being of good quality, upon which stock will be grazed, &c.

The timber industry generally is in a very depressed state owing to shipping and men being difficult to obtain, due to the war.

Thirty-eight mills out of forty-seven worked more or less, but none full-handed—mostly single-handed—i.e., three days per week. The output of timber this year, about 20,000,000 ft., is the least for thirty years, and comprised the following timbers: Red-pine and miro, 13,000,000—65 per cent.; white-pine, 4,000,000—20 per cent.; beech, 2,160,000—10·8 per cent.; black-pine, 500,000—2·5 per cent.; totara, 300,000—1·5 per cent.; rata, 40,000—0·2 per cent.

Royalties from State forests amount to £1,794; from national endowment, nil; from Crown lands, £1,724: total, £3,518.

Duration of each class of timber at present rate of supply, which must be necessarily only approximate, but will probably actually prove less as the demand for timber in Southland increases: Red-pine and miro, twenty-eight years; white-pine, sixteen years; beech, ninety years; black-pine and totara, forty-five years.

The brown-beech is now being used, although considered of little value some years ago, and rata is also being utilized to a limited extent.

There was no destruction by fire this year.

Generally speaking, the Southland forests and timber industry are carefully attended to, but there is no doubt that the market price of sawn timber is rising rapidly, even in Southland, due to increased cost of production, &c.

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