

trade with the Canterbury consumer, the merchants have not ordered except for immediate use, and stocks have been reduced—in fact, in some cases disposed of altogether. The result is that, although building is fairly brisk, the market is unstable.

At the present time it is reported that the average price f.o.b. Greymouth and Hokitika has fallen by 2s., and the retail price in Christchurch is lower by 4s. per 100 ft.

#### *Trade-extension.*

A problem of paramount importance faces the timber industry to-day. Large quantities of imported timber are being used in the Dominion not only for specialized work where no native wood is commonly available, but also in competition with such famous timbers as rimu, &c. Why? Can the situation be remedied?

The plain fact is that foreign producers are often able by better manufacture, seasoning, utilization, and knowledge of an often inferior wood to market a timber superior to that supplied by the local sawmiller. The imported timbers are, moreover, sold at a competitive price even after a long sea carriage up to fourteen thousand miles. It is commonly supposed that this is possible only by the employment of sweated and Asiatic labour. This is a popular mistake. The conditions of sawmill labour in Canada, United States of America, and the Baltic, compare very favourably with those in New Zealand. But whereas the foreign producer so manufactures and seasons timbers from every species in the forest that every stick may find an economic use, the New Zealand sawmiller is frequently unable to do so. He has, however, made very commendable efforts in this direction, as, for instance, in endeavouring to stimulate the use of lower grades by price-reductions. But low grades will never be attractive at any price unless there is real value in the product. Low grades require the most careful manufacture and seasoning—ininitely more so than the high grades. Unless this is recognized and the sawing and drying of the timber more carefully watched, the effort is doomed to failure. No architect or engineer will allow lower grades than are at present specified to be included in building codes unless protection is given the wood by thorough seasoning and by rigorous cleaning-up of timber-yards, many of which harbour decay fungi, borers, and other wood-destroying insects. Only then will the true value of the timber be obtained.

Wood for practically any purpose may be supplied from the New Zealand forests. While it is often possible to persuade consumers to consider the substitution of imported timber by local woods, it is usually found that no stocks of seasoned material are available. This applies not only to secondary timbers, but also to the main species, such as rimu, &c. The Forest Service is agreed on the principle that it is the natural and economic function of the sawmiller to thoroughly dry timber for use. It is a matter of national concern that so much improperly dried timber is used in building-work, and the life of structures consequently decreased.

The efforts of the Forest Service are directed towards securing the economical use of the forest, a measure of considerable importance to the sawmiller, and any operator who desires assistance in this direction is invited to call upon the Service for advice and information. Constant inquiries are received for supplies of the secondary timbers, and millers with stocks ready for disposal should communicate with the Branch of Forest Products. The attention of millers is drawn to the value of northern rata and mangleo for cross-arm purposes. Government Departments, Electric-power Boards, and other users of cross-arms should be approached regarding future supplies.

#### THE FOREST ATLAS.

Lithographing of the eighty sheets covering the most important forest areas of New Zealand was completed during the year, and the sheets were distributed among the various regions. The preparation of the 20-chain maps is being pushed on in order that correct detail maps on a useful scale may be available at an early date.

A special set of maps comprising the Forest Inventory were finalized on a 16-mile-to-the-inch scale, while a 20-mile and an 80-mile scale plan showing the forested regions of both Islands were lithographed and found most useful. Other work produced by the atlas staff during the year consisted of 1,249 plans, maps, tracings, and map-sheets. Photographic records have increased by the addition of 900 negatives and 300 lantern-slides, while further cinema-film is in course of production.

#### EDUCATIONAL.

The particular value of this work is becoming more manifest in the increasing public interest being aroused with regard to forestry matters.

Afforestation posters, fire notices, and leaflets have all done their share towards it, while very definite results have been obtained with the aid of the various circulars and bulletins issued by the Service. Of the latter the most important published during the past year were "The Progress of Forestry in New Zealand," and "Our Forest Resources." The approximate number of publicity sheets, circulars, &c., distributed, amounted to 68,630. The work of the Service has been generously assisted in this matter by the Press of the Dominion, which has continued to keep public interest centred on the great national questions involved in the carrying-out of a successful forest policy.

#### FOREST SERVICE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The reference libraries at the central office and at regional headquarters have proved of great assistance to all officers in their work, and have been strengthened during the year by the addition of 665 works, including books of reference, technical bulletins, &c. Reports of forestry activities have been exchanged with practically every other country interested in forestry. The total number of works filed is now 2,722. The facilities offered by the reference libraries are at the disposal of the public.