

Timber.—Considerable progress has been made in the timber industry during the past year. Three new sawmills have started, and there are at present eighty mills operating in the district. There is no doubt that this is to a great extent the result of the railway connection with Canterbury opened up in August, 1923, by the completion of the Otira Tunnel. At the present time there is a good demand for rimu and kahikatea, which the sawmillers have no difficulty in meeting. The total output of sawn timber for the year was 64,924,030 superficial feet, being an increase of 17,715,433 over last year. The timber comprised 43,057,830 sup. ft. of rimu; 21,545,200 of kahikatea; *Fagus fusca*, 170,600; silver-pine, 83,000; totara, 41,300; and matai, 26,100. Of this output 36,671,208 sup. ft. came off Crown lands, 19,557,191 from private land, and 8,695,631 from provisional State forest.

The total quantity of timber exported beyond New Zealand during the year was 23,570,757 sup. ft., consisting of rimu, kahikatea, and *Fagus fusca*, which shows an increase of 2,211,026 sup. ft. over last year's figures. In addition to the above quantity exported from Westland, a total of 1,842,239 sup. ft. was sent to Australia via Greymouth from the Nelson District.

The following quantities of timber were railed to the east coast through the Otira Tunnel: Quarter ending 30th September, 1923, 2,406,600 sup. ft.; quarter ending 31st December, 1923, 7,149,200 sup. ft.; quarter ending 31st March, 1924, 8,126,800 sup. ft.: total, 17,682,600 sup. ft.

Timber prices per 100 sup. ft. f.o.b. Greymouth are as follows: Rimu—Clean heart, 30s. to 32s.; dressing-quality heart, 25s. to 26s.; building heart, 20s. to 21s.; clean O.B., 20s. to 21s.; dressing O.B., 18s. to 19s.; O.B., 13s. 6d. to 14s. 6d. Kahikatea—Firsts (average), 25s.; seconds (average), 15s. 6d.

Gold-dredging.—The American Gold-dredging Company, operating at Rimu Flat, obtained 11,960 oz. of gold during the year. An area of 20½ acres was dredged. The expected developments at Callaghan's did not materialize, but it is understood that the company may shortly undertake further gold-mining operations on an area just south of Ross. The Rimu Flat operations are expected to continue for at least thirty-five years to come.

Land open for Selection.—No land was opened for selection by ballot during the year. An area of 2,248 acres was taken up under various tenures on permanent titles.

Land Board Work.—Twelve monthly meetings were held during the year as scheduled, occupying one full day each. The Board dealt with eighty-three applications for land, 131 transfers, fifty-five applications by discharged soldiers for advances, transfers, postponements, &c., together with an exceptionally large volume of miscellaneous work.

Revenue and Arrears.—The total gross revenue from all sources (including Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account) during the year amounted to £31,633. The rent roll amounted to £8,894, and arrears of rent £1,100, being a slight decrease compared with last year's figures. A fair proportion of the amount is due by discharged soldiers. Every effort is being made to still further reduce the amounts outstanding.

Land remaining for Selection.—An area of 3,625 acres of bush land has been scheduled for offering, and will be open for selection shortly after the end of the present financial year. The land is situated on the Old Marsden Road, near Greymouth. It is level and hilly, of fair quality, and will be offered on the renewable-lease tenure. Drainage operations at Harihari, under the control of the Chief Drainage Engineer, in respect of an area of 833 acres of Crown land, are almost complete, and, a scheme of subdivision having been approved, the land should be available for occupation in the near future. The area appears to be drying up well. The preliminary field-work in connection with an investigation of large swamp areas in the far south has now been completed, and plans and reports are in course of preparation.

CANTERBURY.

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

Conditions and Progress of Settlement.—The past season generally seems to have been a fair one for the pastoral country, but for the agricultural, dairying, and fruitgrowing industries the season has been generally rather adverse. The weather conditions in north and mid Canterbury could be summed up by saying that there was too much rain in the autumn and winter, and too little in the spring and early summer; and this was aggravated by an unusual prevalence of nor'westers, which on the lighter lands licked up much of the little moisture that was left in the ground.

In north Canterbury some of the farms close to the coast suffered a great deal from the floods, both from the washing-away of the surface soil and the deposit in its place of sand and gravel. The very wet weather in many cases prevented autumn cultivation, and, except in favoured localities, it had to be left till the spring; and when the weather did clear it became so dry that spring-sown crops suffered from lack of moisture, and the yield of oat crops was generally disappointing, and in some cases they were not worth cutting, and were simply fed off with stock. Nearer the foothills, where showers occur more often, conditions were better. Earlier-sown wheat crops were fair, but those put in later returned very poor yields. Autumn- and winter-sown crops were helped by a good fall of rain in December, but there is a considerable falling-off as against the usual yield of the district. The chaff-market, owing to the short yield, promises to be good, and the higher price in consequence is causing some farmers to turn their attention to the use of tractors for much of the cultivation work, on account of the added expense and extra land needed to keep a team. Barley and linseed crops have been very disappointing. Potatoes, where the conditions allowed them to be saved, should be profitable, but the May floods rotted them on many low-lying farms. Attention is still being given to the increase of lucerne plots, and on suitable land a good stand is a useful provision for tiding over a dry spell. On small farms peas are a popular crop, and prices for them have been good. Grass-seed yields have