

A somewhat similar situation exists in regard to houses. With the supply much in excess of the demand in most centres, there has been a general exodus from old-fashioned into more modern homes. Also of some significance is the possibility of modernizing old-fashioned houses.

As in all periods of rapidly falling consumption, foreign timbers have assumed during the year 1930 a more serious effect than usual upon the demand for local timbers. This is due to the invariable delay in their importation, since merchants must contract considerably ahead for their requirements—sometimes as much as a year. Thus the imports during 1930 represent commitments based upon the optimistic note which pervaded building and constructional circles at the end of 1929, before the present depression developed to any serious extent. Already for the first three months of 1931 imports reflect the serious decline in building activities, amounting to only 5 million ft. b.m. as compared with 17 million ft. b.m. imported during the corresponding period of 1930, and it is estimated that the current year's totals will be the lowest since 1923, when only 40 million ft. b.m. were imported as compared with the peak record of 82 million ft. b.m. shipped into New Zealand during 1925. During the current year, therefore, it is confidently asserted that the exchange position, together with price-readjustments, will combine to enable the local timbers to compete more effectively with the imported woods than at any other time during the post-war period.

As to the Australian export markets, practically the whole of the contraction in demand was accounted for by white-pine, the carry-over from the heavy exports in 1929, combined with the general depression during 1930, resulting in purchases being strictly limited to immediate essential requirements. At the conclusion of the current dairying season, however, it is estimated that stocks will have been liquidated, if they have not already been done so, to a point where ordering for next season's requirements is necessary, and an early improvement is anticipated. Rimu exports, amounting to 3½ million ft. b.m., actually displayed a slight improvement as compared with the previous year, a trend which may reasonably be expected to continue, since under the existing tariff and with a return to normality there is a potential market in the Commonwealth for 20 million ft. b.m. of this species per annum.

2. INDUSTRIAL TECHNIQUE.

Although logging ranks as the most efficient branch of the industry, and better logging and yarding methods and equipment are constantly being developed, the fact remains that there still exists room for improvement. Considerable interest has been shown in overhead logging systems, and several installations have been successfully operated; but little attention has yet been directed to the possibilities of tractor logging. Diesel logging and yarding engines also merit further examination.

In their yards operators continue to pay increased attention to the improvement of stacking or piling methods, but there is still a tendency to keep the bottoms of piles too close to the ground, and to fail to appreciate the importance of adequate drainage and good sanitation. Sticklers and waste timber infested with insects and decay are characteristic of far too many yards. No new dry kilns have been installed during the period under review, but there is a rapidly increasing appreciation of their possibilities, and several units, it is anticipated, will be erected during the next year. Some operators continue to attempt artificial drying with inefficient equipment—so much so that it was found necessary to broadcast a public warning that unless dried in kilns of approved and recognized design and operation kiln-dried timber could not be regarded as satisfactory.

3. STATISTICS.

The following tables, showing production, imports, and exports, are presented in substantially the same form as in previous years, but the use of footnotes is extended to replace the usual text.

TABLE 4.

REPORTED PRODUCTION OF ROUGH-SAWN TIMBER.

(From information supplied by the Government Statistician. All figures refer to the years ended 31st March.)

Species.	1928.		1929.		1930.	
	Quantity.	Per Cent.	Quantity.	Per Cent.	Quantity.	Per Cent.
	Ft. b.m.		Ft. b.m.		Ft. b.m.	
Rimu	156,314,000	58·0	156,240,000	57·9	163,293,000	57·8
White-pine ..	53,736,000	19·9	56,790,000	21·0	58,505,000	20·7
Matai	15,207,000	5·6	15,753,000	5·8	17,972,000	6·4
Kauri	15,874,000	5·9	10,743,000	4·0	10,471,000	3·7
Totara	10,728,000	4·0	8,611,000	3·2	9,046,000	3·2
Beech	7,923,000	2·9	9,846,000	3·6	10,225,000 ⁽¹⁾	3·6
Insignis pine ..	7,695,000	2·9	9,168,000	3·4	10,382,000 ⁽²⁾	3·7
Other	2,306,000	0·8	3,063,000	1·1	2,511,000	0·9
Totals	269,783,000	100·0	270,214,000	100·0	282,405,000 ⁽³⁾	100·0
Average, f.o.r. Mill value	18s. per 100 ft. b.m.		17s. 9d. per 100 ft. b.m.		17s. 11d. per 100 ft. b.m.	

(1) A peak record.

(2) Only once exceeded, in 1922, when 11 million ft. b.m. were sawn.

(3) Production by regions: Auckland and Rotorua, 98 million ft. b.m. (35 per cent.); Wellington, 57 million ft. b.m. (20 per cent.); Westland, 72 million ft. b.m. (26 per cent.); Southland, 30 million ft. b.m. (10 per cent.); Nelson-Marlborough, 14 million ft. b.m. (5 per cent.); and Canterbury-Otago, 11 million ft. b.m. (4 per cent.).