

The increased demand for Australian hardwoods so prominent in 1935 failed to develop further during 1936, importations falling from 23,500,000 ft. to less than 20,000,000 ft. board measure, but an early recovery is anticipated as a result of Government constructional activities in connection with railways and public works.

3. EXPORTS.

A totally unexpected decline in exports from 39,642,000 ft. board measure in 1935 to only 27,027,000 ft. in 1936 has converted, as far as the external timber trade is concerned, a favourable balance into an unfavourable one. Kauri was the only important timber of which the exports increased over those for the previous year, emphasizing the necessity for immediate export control of this timber. The decline in white-pine exports from almost 23,000,000 ft. to less than 15,000,000 ft. board measure has been explained elsewhere in this report. No less surprising was the decline in exports of rimu from 9,000,000 ft. to 6,000,000 ft. board measure, this being accounted for by the excellent local demand, coupled with the fact that the local prices have given a better return than the export prices. The same comment is probably applicable to the reduced exports of matai. In the case of silver beech, only 2,033,000 ft. board measure were exported during 1936, as compared with 2,766,000 ft. during the previous year, but in this case the decline is due largely to the fact that the markets for this timber in Australia have contracted materially. Hitherto the motor-body building industry has absorbed a large part of the exports to the Commonwealth, but with the swing-over from wood or composite construction to all-steel structures, an acute position has developed on this market. New Zealand silver beech is not the only timber affected, several Australian timbers being used for the same purpose either on the same or a larger scale. With a heavy reduction in demand for all motor-body-building timbers, competition between them in other fields has naturally been intensified, and it is a tribute to the sterling qualities of the New Zealand timber that its exports remain even at the present level.

The reduced exports of insignis-pine box-shooks are believed to be of only a temporary nature and it is fully anticipated that during the forthcoming year the 1935 record will be attained, if not exceeded.

4. REGIONAL PLANNING OF INDIGENOUS FOREST AREAS.

Arising out of the acute shortage of white-pine and of the necessity for reinstatement of export control of various timbers, attention has been focused as never before on the vital importance of maintaining in productivity as many as possible of the remaining major indigenous forest areas. The coastal plain and low terrace rimu forests of South Westland form an area of outstanding importance. Not only do they occupy essentially forest lands unsuitable for agriculture, but they carry the most extensive stand of pole-type forest in the Dominion. Promising as they do to lend themselves to some type of selective cutting, it has been thought desirable to plan the development of these forests on a regional scale with a view to providing transport facilities which will allow them to be managed on a sustained yield basis and according to appropriate silvicultural treatment.

Having regard to the national importance of this project, the Government authorized the setting-up of a South Westland Development Committee representative of officers of the New Zealand Railways, the Departments of Public Works, Marine, Transport, and Agriculture, and the State Forest Service. This Committee has since been actively engaged on a searching investigation of transport facilities both by land and sea, immediate attention being concentrated upon the development of the sector lying between Ross and the Waihou River. The State Forest Service has also initiated various surveys into the white-pine resources of this sector and, as already shown, the preliminary results indicate the necessity for revising downwards all earlier estimates of white-pine. The final recommendations of the Committee will not be available until the mid-part of the forthcoming year.

TABLE 5.

REPORTED PRODUCTION OF ROUGH-SAWN TIMBER, BY SPECIES.

From information supplied by the Government Statistician. All figures refer to the years ended 31st March, 1934-1936.)

Species.	1934.		1935.		1936.	
	Quantity.	Percentage of Total Quantity.	Quantity.	Percentage of Total Quantity.	Quantity.	Percentage of Total Quantity.
	Ft. b.m.		Ft. b.m.		Ft. b.m.	
Rimu	96,125,000	48.6	125,488,000	51.4	157,631,000	53.8
White-pine	47,949,000	24.3	52,294,000	21.5	52,075,000	17.8
Matai	10,760,000	5.5	13,880,000	5.7	19,069,000	6.6
Kauri	4,946,000	2.5	5,553,000	2.3	7,332,000	2.5
Totara	7,197,000	3.6	8,867,000	3.6	11,778,000	4.0
Beech	6,972,000	3.6	7,725,000	3.2	8,855,000	3.0
Insignis pine	21,494,000	10.9	27,311,000	11.2	34,104,000	11.6
Miro	671,000	0.3	915,000	0.4	772,000	0.3
Tawa	214,000	0.1	746,000	0.3	25,000	..
Rata	97,000	0.1	92,000	..	126,000	..
Other	1,230,000	0.5	911,000	0.4	1,308,000	0.4
Totals	197,655,000	100.0	243,782,000	100.0	293,075,000	100.0