

# SAWMILLING SECTION.

[This Section is published by arrangement with the Dominion Federated Sawmillers' Association (Incorp.) in the interests of the Sawmilling Industry of N.Z.]

Editor: W. T. IRVINE.

The net is being drawn more closely round the sawmillers by the Minister in charge of the timber regulations—additions to which have been gazetted and read as follows:—

(1) "It shall not be lawful for any person to sell any timber standing on any public or private land of any tenure, or to grant a license to cut any timber standing on any such land, except pursuant to a license issued in that behalf by the Governor-General in Council."

(2) "Any license issued by the Governor-General in Council under these regulations may be in like manner revoked."

(3) "Every person who sells any standing timber, or who grants a license to cut any standing timber, contrary to the provisions of these regulations commits an offence against these regulations, and shall be liable for each offence to a fine of £50."

Elsewhere will be found some comment by the Hon. W. D. S. MacDonald on Cost problems and the regulation of prices of footwear and standardised boots. The manufacturer of boots—if prices are fixed—naturally claims that the price of leather must also be fixed. Then the tanner in turn demands the fixation of the price he shall pay for hides and so on, all of which simply goes to show the impossibility of fixing prices that shall be equitable unless the wages, transport charges to market, and all materials entering into the cost of the article produced, are likewise fixed.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge of the Timber Regulations has laid it down that the miller is entitled to a fair price for his timber, but this price is not to be regulated by current export prices. This must, therefore, mean that home consumption shall have special consideration should the demand for export increase, even although the export trade is now regulated, and dependent upon the output, and local requirements which must first be satisfied. We maintain that timber is now largely regulated in price by the world's markets, and assuming that a better price for export can be obtained than the local price ruling—the difference is really extracted from the pockets of the sawmiller for the benefit of the community—and this appears to be wholly unjustifiable under ordinary conditions. If we compare this position with that of land values which have increased enormously within the past five years—no doubt largely owing to the increased value of our primary products—the whole of the increase is mopped up by the holder of the land who reaps

the full benefit when he transfers to the next buyer, although, as in the case of the cities particularly the increased value is often very largely community-created. It would appear that until all products and manufactures are treated alike from a commercial point of view it is invidious and unfair to single any one of them out for harsh restriction. The old laws of supply and demand together with the time-worn axiom that the essence of trading is "to buy with the cheapest and sell in the dearest market," when interfered with, generally leads to an unknown goal.

Since our last issue the Timber Advisory Committee has again been in consultation with the Board of Trade regarding a standard classification, and the fixation of prices, but so far we understand no finality has been reached. The whole problem is a complex one, the various grades and classes of timber having a different interpretation in different parts of the Dominion, and those in turn being recognised by local merchants, contractors and architects. There is a strong demand for building timber at current rates, and although there is probably not the same inquiry for shipping contracts for Australia, this is accounted for chiefly because of some doubts regarding future supplies from other sources than our Dominion, and the transition stage from war to peace conditions.

The Parliamentary Industries Committee has held sittings in the principal towns of the South Island, and voluminous evidence has been taken with regard to a number of industries. The Committee will take evidence at the Magistrate's Court, Auckland, on Wednesday, the 16th April at 2.30 p.m., and later on will visit several centres including Palmerston North. The Palmerston Chamber of Commerce has arranged that several of its members shall give evidence on such subjects as wood pulp, afforestation, manufacture of paper, extracts from wood, such as dyes, potash, etc., white pine and butter boxes, and these matters appear to be worthy of the consideration of sawmillers and others who are desirous of fostering new industries.

At Wakeman's Hotel, Taihape, on the evening of the 4th April, a complimentary banquet was tendered to Mr W. G. Haybittle by the members of the Rangitikei General and Co-operative Timber Company, Ltd., on the occasion of his retiring from the chairmanship of that company after a period of eleven years consecutive service. Mr R. W. Smith, M.P., acted as chairman of the banquet and after