

means the systematic marking off for felling, of the mature trees, and hauling them out of the forest, the consequent destruction of growth being estimated at only one per cent. Timber in New Zealand is already extremely high in price, but if it had to be obtained on these lines in every case, it would be even more expensive. To take the millable timber in the Manawatu district as an example. The forest is practically all mature, and the country excessively rough and hilly. To open out the average timber block involves great expense in building tramlines and haulage inclines. How some of the log haulers are got into position would puzzle the layman, who must have a great admiration for the perseverance and skill of the miller in making the necessary preparations for felling. If the miller, after all this preparation, was permitted only to cull a tree here and there, he would not pay wages, much less get a return on the large amount of capital which has to be expended before a penny of revenue can be earned. His equipment is such that it cannot be allowed to stand for years, to be utilised a little now and then, in accordance with Sir David Hutchins' idea of natural forest development and regeneration. However, in the report there is much valuable matter which will serve to encourage the building up of a definite policy having as its object the development of large areas of land, unsuitable for farming, so as to keep the Dominion supplied with timber, and return a better profit than if the land is laid down with a poor sole of grass, on which settlers will have to struggle hard to make a living from their herds.

**Tariff
Protection
Needed.**

We propose to return to the report itself at a later date, and meanwhile we reproduce one paragraph of special interest to the sawmilling trade generally. Under the heading "Tariff Protection for Home-grown Timber," Sir David Hutchins remarks: "If there is a strong case anywhere for a high import tariff, it is to protect the impoverished forests of New Zealand, and their industries, against this unfair temporary competition—timber 'dumping.' By the time that the Kauri and other forests mature as cultivated forests, with perhaps ten times their present average productiveness, foreign timber will have ceased to trouble home industries. Most of the private forests in North America will have gone the way of private forests generally, and the national forests will be insufficient to supply national needs in America, leaving nothing for export. As much as four-fifths of the present merchantable timber in the United States is private. Siberian forests are earmarked for the supply of Europe and a civilised China."

**Legislation
by
Rule of
Thumb.**

A very shrewd and well informed writer on economic subjects who visited N.Z. some years ago, for the purpose of investigating the legislation which at that time was extremely advanced, published his conclusions under the suggestive title of "Socialism with-

out Method." He demonstrated that New Zealanders, having a happy facility for experiment, and being unhampered by the traditions and vested interests of older countries, had drifted into one socialistic experiment after the other, entirely as a result of their practical efforts to solve awkward social problems, and that although the result was a series of statutes of definitely socialistic nature, their promoters were not academic socialists, and had no idea of carrying out reform according to the tenets of that party. New Zealand has dropped out of the van of socialistic experiment, but its legislative developments continue to proceed on rule of thumb methods, prompted by the ancient, well-worn motto, that "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." And this has landed the industrial community into an awkward position. As a palliative to the rising cost of living, and to preserve industrial peace, Parliament passed an amendment of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act which enables the parties to an award to reopen it at any time, for the purpose of reconsidering wages in the light of current prices of necessities. The standard taken by the Arbitration Court is the index number of prices of articles of common use, as compiled by the Government Statistician. Upon that basis—a very unreliable one as we shall show—wages are rising all round, and the climax has not yet been reached. At present, the workers are suspicious of these official figures, which they regard as too conservative to be fair. We agree with them after looking carefully into the method of their compilation. Our space is too limited to go into the whole series of figures, therefore we will deal only with those relating to rent, a subject on which our readers will be able to form their own conclusions from actual knowledge. In February of this year, the Government Statistician was still using a table showing the average weekly rents in twenty-five representative towns for August of last year. Everyone knows that houses have become scarcer since that date, but so far as rents are concerned, the Arbitration Court, in adjusting wages of to-day, still takes the rents of August 1919 into consideration. The official table gives assurance that the "average rent" of a six-roomed dwelling is as follows in the four chief centres:—

Auckland	....	....	....	18s. 7d.
Wellington	....	....	....	24s. 2d.
Christchurch	....	....	....	19s. 3d.
Dunedin	....	....	....	18s. 5d.

If anyone attempted to get a house in any of these centres at the "average" price, what sort of a dwelling would he obtain? Wellington City Council is carrying out a housing scheme in Northland, which is not a suburb as easily reached as many although the City Council has advantages not possessed by private house builders, and intends to let other areas in the city, and complaint is made that the dwellings at net cost price, it is going to charge thirty shillings per week.