

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 table printed in this issue, showing the quantity of building timber produced, exported, and used locally in the years 1919-20, as compared with 1917-18, should go a long way towards silencing those who are continually crying out against the export of timber whilst local requirements remain unsatisfied. It will be observed that in the later period only 5.3 per cent. of the total produced was exported, against 22.9 per cent. in 1917-18, the reduction of the quantity exported in proportion to the total output being thus 17.6 per cent. within the two-yearly period. This goes to show the sawmiller is out to satisfy local requirements, but in doing so he is clearly entitled to look for the same price as he would receive if the timber were exported to Australia. The sawmiller cannot possibly see any difference between his position and that of the butter producer, who claims to receive the export value of his product if sold in the local market. This claim is continually being put forward by farmers' unions, dairy companies and others, and exactly the same principle, we contend, applies to timber—and until local prices are on a parity with the export price, sawmillers feel they are unfairly treated and have genuine cause for dissatisfaction. A copy of the table was laid on the table of the House a day or two ago, and apparently gave such genuine satisfaction that no comments from members were forthcoming.

Amendments to the "Workers Compensation Act" have been introduced in the House by the Minister for Labour, the Hon. Sir W. H. Herries—the principal of which is the increase in the maximum amount payable from £500 to £750. Provision is also made for reducing the period of incapacitation in which compensation should be paid from seven to three days. The maximum weekly compensation payable in case of accident is increased from £2 10s. to £3 15s., and of medical expenses from £1 to £20. The section of the principal Act which makes compensation payable to mining contractors is applied to contractors to cut standing timber, including the cutting of scrub and the clearing of land of stumps and logs. Compensation in cases of minor accidents are also increased, and the jurisdiction of Magistrates is extended to include cases where the claim does not exceed £50.

A report of the proceedings at the annual meeting of the New Zealand Forestry League is just to hand, giving reprints of papers contributed by Mr. W. J. Butler (Hokitika), president of the Sawmillers' Federation, entitled "A Commercial Analysis of the Natural Process of Producing Timber," and by Mr. A. Leigh Hunt on "The Uses of New Zealand

Timber for Furniture.' Captain MacIntosh Ellis, Director of Forestry, was amongst those present, and in the course of his remarks emphasised his opinion that New Zealand would advance in forestry only so far as the Forestry League would let the movement go. Amongst the councillors elected for the ensuing year are Messrs. Butler (Hokitika), R. A. Wilson (Bulls), and S. M. Stone (Wellington), each of whom is directly connected with the sawmilling industry. An effort is being made by the Federation to induce all of its members to become members of the League, as it is felt the claims of sawmillers should have a prominent place in the discussions of the council, and that the sawmilling industry must go hand in hand with forestry development schemes. In Canada the business public form the bulk of the members of the League, as the industry is a permanent one, and is looked upon as being of national importance.

Owing to the increased railway tariff, and the added cost of timber landed in the various centres, the Board of Trade has approved of an increase of 1s. per 100 feet on the Auckland timber merchants' prices for kauri, matai, rimu and totara. Wellington timber merchants' prices are also increased 1s. per 100 feet with the approval of the Board for the same reason.

Comparative statement showing the output, export and quantity placed on the New Zealand market of rimu, kauri, matai and totara for the years 1917-18 and 1919-20.

1917-18.					
Timber.	Output.	Export.	Per cent.	Placed on N.Z. Market.	Per cent.
Rimu	111,318,579	27,583,235	23.7	88,875,298	76.3
Kauri	21,835,023	10,454,494	34.8	10,552,692	65.2
Matai	11,930,040	493,964	3.8	12,374,501	96.2
Totara	13,387,038	57,337	0.4	13,518,126	99.6
Totals	158,470,680	38,589,030	22.9	134,320,617	77.1
1919-20.					
Timber.	Output.	Export.	Per cent.	Placed on N.Z. Market.	Per cent.
Rimu	145,584,203	10,101,000	7	135,483,203	93
Kauri	22,598,391	362,000	1.6	22,236,391	98.4
Matai	17,820,597	Nil	—	17,820,597	100
Totara	4,414,298	Nil	—	14,414,298	100
Totals	200,417,489	10,463,000	5.3	189,954,489	94.7

(Note.—The discrepancy between the total output in 1917 and the quantities exported and placed on the New Zealand market during that period is accounted for by stocks held at the beginning of the period.)