

Sawmilling Section.

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Some interesting facts are to be gleaned from a study of the "N.Z. Official Year Book," and from that for 1920 and the advance sheets for the 1921 Book, kindly supplied us by the Government Statistician, we find that the Timber Industry stands second on the list of manufactories as regards number of employees; the total number employed for the year ending 31st March, 1920, being (with sash and door factories) 7,265, of whom 7,203 are males. Taking into consideration the dependents of these men, it thus is evident that the Timber Industry supports a very large number of our population. It actually accounted during 1918-19 for 8.7 per cent. of the total employees engaged in all industries listed and 11.24 per cent. of the total males employed. The total of wages paid in the Timber Industry for the same period was £1,062,985 (or only £221,358 less than the Freezing Industry, which stands highest on the list), accounting for 13.21 per cent. of the total wages paid in all listed industries during that year. For 1919-20 the total of wages paid was £1,421,867. Against these figures the total value of the produce of the industry is given as £2,329,535, or only 4.1 per cent. of the total value of products of all industries in 1918-19; and for 1919-20 the sawn timber produced was valued at £2,181,805, which means that in the Timber Industry wages account for a greater proportion of the value of the product than in any other industry, the actual figures for 1919-20 being 61 per cent.

Every £100 paid in productive wages during 1918-19 in the Timber Industry produced only £247 in value of product, so that those who are seeking a removal of the duty on low grade Oregon are aiming a blow at a very large body of rural workers who, with any cessation of activity at the sawmills, would inevitably drift to the towns to swell the body of unemployed which is undoubtedly going to be a severe problem during the present winter.

In the matter of capital involved the Timber Industry stands second in the list of all industries, and in the statistical figures for the year ending March, 1920, the total value of Fixed Assets—Land and Buildings, Machinery, Plant and Tramways—is shown as £2,139,670, which is 7.23 per cent. of the total value of assets of all industries given for the year 1919.

With all due respect to them in their professional capacity we hardly think, however, that the Institute of Architects is a competent body to put forward the claim for a removal of duty on imported timbers, and in making such a move we

doubt whether they have not acted in ignorance of the importance and magnitude of the N.Z. Timber Industry, though one would think that they would have some regard for the great body of employees engaged in it and its allied and contingent industries whom such removal of duty would immediately affect.

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A shipment of Oregon timber was offered for sale at auction recently (says the *New Zealand Herald*), but bids were few, and the comparatively small quantity sold brought a price below the recent auction rate, which was about 50s. per 100ft. Official quotations have not been supplied, but it is understood the price was about 40s. One authority upon timber states that Oregon timber bought on the Pacific Coast at recent prices would return a very satisfactory profit if sold at 40s. The low price at which Oregon has been landed in Australia during recent months has practically stopped the exportation of New Zealand white pine to the Commonwealth. At present prices white pine cannot compete with Oregon in Australia.—*Otago Daily Times*.

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The following letters which recently passed between Mr. H. Valder (of Messrs. Ellis and Burnand, Hamilton) and Lord Haldane, are interesting in that the scheme of "limiting the return to capital to market rates" put forward—with certain additions as to "risk rate," etc.—by the former at last year's general meeting of the Employers' Federation so closely coincides with the suggestions contained in Lord Haldane's letter:—

[COPY]

Hamilton, N.Z.,
October 30th, 1920.
Lord Haldane,
Houses of Parliament,
Westminster.

My Lord,—The enclosed cutting relating to a cabled report of your address to the Institute of National Industrial Councils of Great Britain was published in the New Zealand papers recently, and as I am keenly interested in the subject of industrial organisation, I venture to ask you to instruct the Secretary of the Institute to send me the full report of your address.

In this Dominion there is a tendency on the part of employers to seek a solution of the great Labour and Capital problem along the lines indicated in your address, and the publication of the details would, I am sure, be of great help in promoting that feeling.