

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.]
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With the opening of Parliament on September 22nd, and the immediate introduction of the Forests Bill the following day, the issue of the Bulletin by the Department of Industries and Commerce on "Sawmillers' Costs and Prices" on the 3rd October and the probable early introduction of the Tariff Bill, there is much of vital importance to the milling industry taking place at the present time, and it behoves all those interested in the industry to see that their interests are properly safeguarded.

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The Forests Bill was ably dealt with in a leader in the *Dominion* of September 24th, and the Bill itself has been widely published in the newspapers throughout New Zealand, but does not appear to have received much comment or criticism so far. We agree with the *Dominion* in hoping that the introduction of the Bill marks a definite break with the bad past in which the forest wealth of the Dominion was improvidently wasted, and must certainly support the plea of that paper that some provision should be made in the measure for providing for definite and adequate inspection and demarcation by the officers of the Forest Service, who are properly trained for that purpose, of all forest lands which remain in New Zealand, whether already under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service or not, before such are thrown open for settlement. In fact, when it is proposed that any lands containing bush shall be opened up for settlement we consider that provision should be made for the State Forest Service to make thorough inspection of such bush and be in a position to say that such and such areas must *not* be alienated, but must either first be offered for milling purposes or else permanently reserved for continuous production of forest products.

The main details of the Bill are largely of technical character, but in the personnel of the proposed Advisory Board better provision should be made for representation of the sawmilling industry, for the conditions of sawmilling in the North Island vary so greatly from the conditions in the South that at least one representative from each Island should be included.

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We continue to receive from Mr. W. T. Irvine from Sydney newspaper clippings regarding the timber industry and tariff question in Australia, and it would appear that the effect of the new Australian tariff on the timber trade there is likely to have the effect of closing that market to those lower grades of New Zealand timbers, the whole of which it is quite impossible for the home market to absorb. The whole effect of the new tariff upon our timber industry, intercolonial shipping

and freights cannot yet be judged, but there is clear indication that it is essential for some form of reciprocity to be arranged between the two countries, for otherwise not only the timber but all trade with Australia will suffer a considerable diminution. The latest news of Mr. Irvine was that he was still feeling very unwell.

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The Bulletin on "Sawmillers' Costs and Prices" recently issued by the Board of Trade appears to have received fairly wide publicity in the daily newspapers but so far has received very little comment or criticism, and this appears to be an indication that the position regarding the timber trade from the sawmillers' point of view has been put so clearly before the public by the Bulletin that it offers very little grounds for criticism. It makes one point very clear, and that is that there is very little prospect of any reduction in timber prices, and this should to a large extent restore confidence in building activities, and show those who are at present holding back from building in the hope of a fall in prices that no good cause is to be served by such waiting.

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Ranger Crowley, of the State Forest Department, whose headquarters are now at Palmerston North instead of Wellington, is busy on a special job in the silver pine State forest west of Tongariro, selecting and marking out a sawmill area for the Prisons Department.

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We have to acknowledge receipt from the State Forest Service of copy of last month's issue of their monthly Newsletter, "Te Karere o Tane." Much of the contents are of interest to those engaged in the timber industry, but space only allows us to quote the following paragraph:—

"The head office, Wellington, of the State Forest Service had the pleasure of a visit from Mr. Van Dusen recently. Mr. Van Dusen is an officer of the British Columbia Forest Branch, and is on a tour through Australasia on behalf of one of the big Canadian timber concerns. He expressed himself as very gratified to hear of the progress made in forestry matters in New Zealand, and was particularly glad to see that the Minister had adopted a progressive timber-sale policy. He strongly urged the dedication of all Crown forests as provisional State forests, as in his experience unity of control is an absolute necessity. Interest in the timber trade is looking much brighter, and he considers that the Australian market is showing marked improvement, that Oregon prices have reached bottom, and that an improvement in that line also may now be looked for. Oregon is at present quoted at about 17s. 6d. landed in New Zealand."