

SAWMILLING SECTION.

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In another column we publish a statement prepared by the Rangitikei Co-operative Timber Co., Taihape, for the Board of Trade, which shows the exports of timber made by that Company to Australia for the past six years. Of the total quantity exported it will be seen the bulk is white pine, and that ordinary building timber only figures at 2,330,000 feet, or an average of about 400,000 feet per annum. A statement of this kind compiled from authentic records should effectually silence the foolish talk indulged in by interested parties who are wholly ignorant of the facts, but use the argument that because of the exportation of so much building timber they cannot obtain supplies for local needs, and our own people are suffering for the benefit of Australia. The shortage of timber is attributable to a variety of causes, chief amongst which may be mentioned the scarcity of labour during the war period, with the consequent lessened output of the mills that carried on; the fire that destroyed a number of mills in the Raetihi district; the fear that if new mills were started plant, equipment, and men would not be forthcoming to run them, and last but not least, the restrictions with regard to limitation of price and export. During the war period, too, it must be borne in mind that the erection of dwellings almost ceased for a time, and there can be little doubt the limit of 8 per cent. on capital value by way of rent return, was too low to induce any one to build for speculative purposes. If a fair return can be obtained for timber produced from the less accessible milling areas, and labour becomes more plentiful, we may hope to see mills erected that will help to ease the present shortage.

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The Australian Commonwealth proposed alterations in the Customs Tariff provide for an increase of duty on timber other than that used for the purpose of box making for the dairy industry. This would mean that rimu and white pine used for building purposes would be placed on a level with other timbers and if the previous duty on these is maintained, would be subject to an increase of 2s. 6d. per 100ft. super.

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In the turmoil of unrest throughout the civilised world no problem of greater moment stands out so prominently as the relationship of Capital and Labour, employer and employee, and we notice that

the N.Z. Federated Employers' Association has taken the matter up and called a conference, to which delegates have been invited, for the purpose of considering it and if possible finding some reasonable solution. From the employers' point of view, it must be increasingly clear many of our old ideas must be swept away, and that a definite interest under proper safeguards should be given to workers who assist in bringing about the results that capital looks for continually. On the part of the employee "go-slow" methods must end if he is to reap the benefits he looks for, but unfortunately too often tries to obtain by "direct action" or some other method that must in the end defeat its own object. In the interests of the community as a whole, the best brains of the country could not be devoted to a more worthy subject, and we shall look forward with great interest to the outcome of this conference.

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In connection with re-forestation in N.Z. it is stated that "probably on the whole the most useful advocacy of a better forest policy has come from a few timber merchants and millers, alarmed at the approaching extinction of their industry. It was the millers and hardwood dealers of New South Wales that at last brought about the adoption of a national forest policy in that state. As is pointed out when speaking of white pine, if every dairy-farmer would join the Forest League, there would be no more talk about getting butter-box timber from Siberia. And if every miller and bushman would do the same, there would be no fear of the extinction of their great industry."

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The milling of *pinus insignis* for rough boxes proceeds apace, and we hear of "stands" producing up to about 300,000 feet to the acre. This should be an inducement to farmers and others to go in for planting this quick-growing fir.

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The crop of apples in the Nelson district is so prolific this season that the estimate of the box makers is proved to have been only about one half of the actual quantity of timber required, and the manufacturers are in trouble to fill their needs and keep pace with the quantity of boxes demanded by the growers of the fruit. Hitherto shorts and rough timber have been supplied by the local mills and the West Coast for this purpose, but enquiries have lately been made to obtain supplies from the North Island.