

as much as from British Columbia. The remaining forest areas of importance in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland will average over 100 miles by rail from the nearest markets.

POSSIBILITIES OF PRODUCTION.

The best of the remaining Australian forest is now being cut. Excepting in Western Australia, the areas of commercial forest are being seriously overcut. Even if capital, which has not been fortunate in Australian timber, were disposed to engage in increased lumber production, but few areas are available which could be opened up to such an extent as to affect the annual production, unless there was a very substantial increase in present prices.

Increased production is permanently possible in Western Australia. Only one-third, however, of the Western Australia output finds its way to the Eastern Australian market.

The exports from Western Australia in 1914 were:—

Exported to—	Feet B.M.
Eastern Australia.....	57,000,000
Africa.....	38,000,000
India and Ceylon.....	28,000,000
New Zealand.....	24,000,000
United Kingdom.....	18,500,000
Belgium.....	2,500,000
Argentina.....	1,500,000
Others.....	2,500,000
Total.....	172,000,000

West Australian timber is exported chiefly for railroad sleepers, docks, public works and special uses in railroad carriage and ship building. The average f.a.s. value is about \$33 per thousand feet. The freight 3,000 miles to the Eastern Australian market is about \$12.50 per thousand. For this reason the West Australian forests producing hardwoods only are not likely to seriously compete with imported softwoods in the important Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney markets of Eastern Australia.

SUMMARY.

Although large quantities of timber exist in Australia, it is not so suited for general building purposes as are the imported softwoods, the cost of placing it on the market is more than equal to the c.i.f. cost of the imported woods and is likely to increase. It is to be expected that while Australian woods will continue to be exported for sleepers and other special uses and will be used to even greater extent for interior finish, flooring, furniture and manufacturing in Australia, softwoods, the chief of which is Douglas fir, will continue to be imported in increasing quantities and proportions for the needs of the population.