



REPORT

Vol. 13 No. 14 1988

LIRA COPYRIGHT 1988

NEW ZEALAND

OTAGO/SOUTHLAND LOGGING WORKFORCE SURVEY

(PRELIMINARY RESULTS)

John Gaskin

Barry Smith (F.R.I.)

Peter Wilson (F.R.I.)

ABSTRACT

With the completion of the Otago/Southland region, 390 loggers have been interviewed as part of the Logging Workforce Survey. The data was collected from three geographical areas - Bay of Plenty (202), Northland (97) and Otago/Southland (91).

There was little difference between the three regions in the age of loggers, their reasons for working in logging, their method of recruitment and their take-home pay. Outside the Bay of Plenty, however, more loggers were paid on piece-rate. The majority felt there was ample opportunity for school leavers in the logging industry. This view, however, was qualified by the very strong support for the establishment of formal training for school leavers.

INTRODUCTION

The third and final region to be surveyed as part of the Logging Workforce Survey program was Otago/Southland (defined as that area to the south of Dunedin including loggers working to the south of the Killmogg Hill). Like Northland, this area was selected because a major expansion is anticipated in logging activity by the turn of the century. Its geographical isolation from the mainstream of exotic logging will also provide an interesting comparison with the Bay of Plenty and Northland (Gaskin et al, 1987, Wilson et al, 1987).

As with the Northland survey, the entire exotic logging workforce in the area was interviewed. In total, 21 gangs were surveyed involving interviews with 91

loggers. All interviews were conducted between January and April 1988. The numerous itinerant logging operations in the area were not considered. Because indigenous operations were excluded in the other two areas, the large indigenous logging workforce was not covered by this survey either.

This Report presents the demographic information collected and compares the results with the other two regions. Where comparisons are made, the Otago/Southland data is presented first, followed by the Bay of Plenty and Northland data in brackets. Bay of Plenty information precedes that from Northland with the two data points separated by means of a "/".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors acknowledge the co-operation of the loggers who took part in the survey, along with the contractors, gang foremen, and companies for allowing the survey to be conducted.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The predominance of contract logging crews was as evident here as in the other two areas, with only two of the 21 crews surveyed being company employees. The number of clearfell to thinning crews was 20 : 1 (17 : 20 / 16 : 6). Like Northland, this ratio reflects a relatively limited market for smallwood at the time of the survey. The one thinning crew was logging Douglas fir for small sawlogs. Average crew size was 4.6, a figure very similar to Northland (4.7), though one person fewer than

gangs working in the Bay of Plenty (5.6). There was, however, less variability in crew size, a range of 2 to 6 compared with 3 to 12 in the Bay of Plenty and 1 to 8 in Northland.

Age

The average age of Otago/Southland loggers was the same as their Northland counterparts, 31.7 (29.5 / 31.7), with the range being slightly narrower than either of the other two groups - from 17 to 54, (15 to 62/17 to 59). A comparison of the age distribution of the three groups is given in Figure 1.

Time in Logging

Table 1 gives the length of time spent in logging and time spent with the current gang for Otago/Southland. The average length of time spent in logging was 6.5 years (8.1/4.9), while the average length of time spent in the current logging crew was 13 months (2 yrs / 1.8 yrs). On average, the loggers had worked in 2.3 crews (3.1 / 2.0), with 19% (35% / 14%) of Otago/Southland loggers having worked in more than three gangs. Like Northland, this lower percentage was expected, given the smaller amount of activity and the dispersed nature of logging in the area.

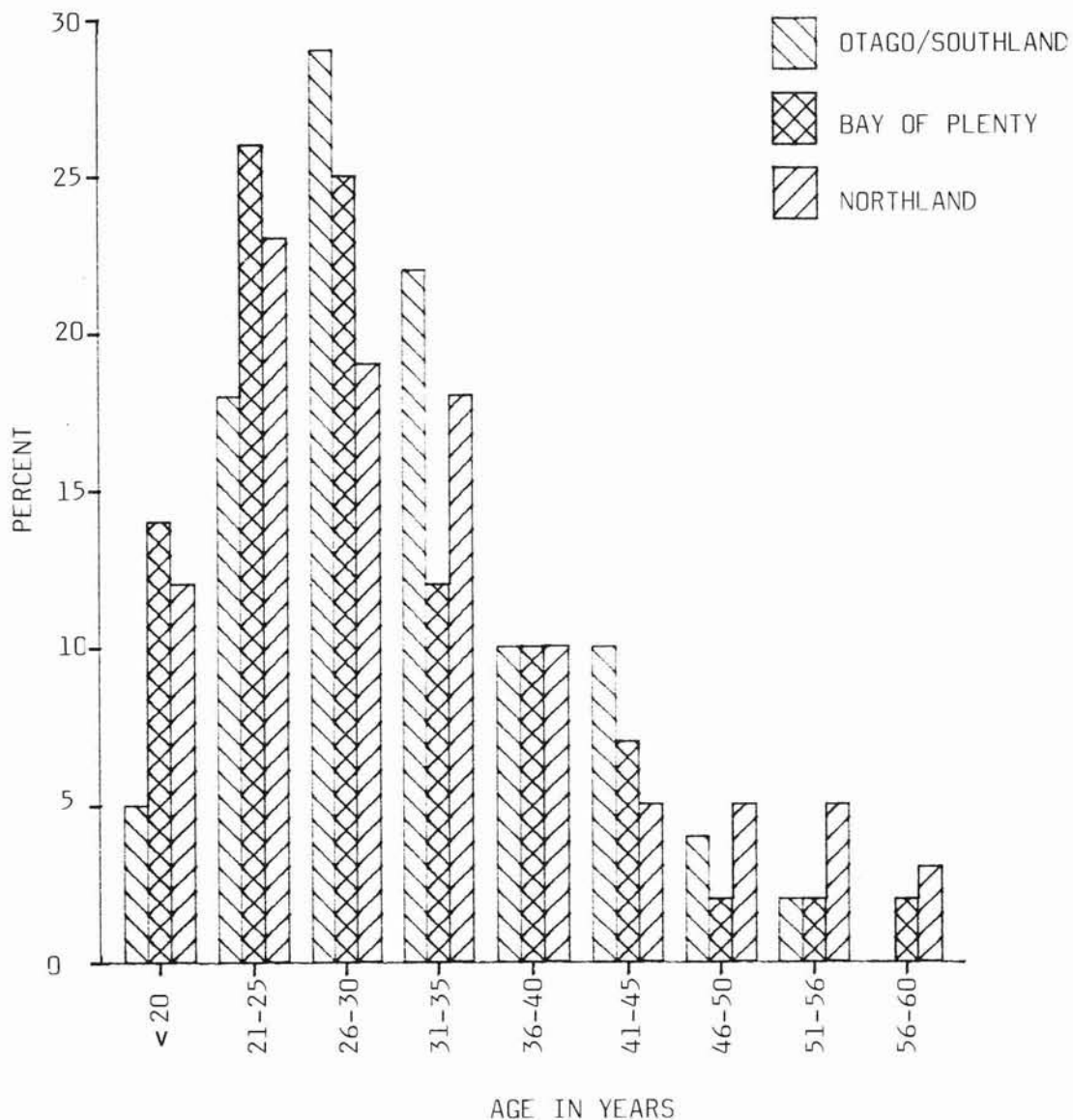


Figure 1 - Age Distribution

Table 1 : Length of Time in Logging and Time in Current Gang

Period	Length of Time in Logging		Time in Current Gang	
	Otago/ Southland	(Bay of Plenty/ Northland)	Otago/ Southland	(Bay of Plenty/ Northland)
	%	%	%	%
< 3 months	10.2	(4.5/ 4.2)	25.9	(16.4/15.5)
4 to 6 months	2.3	(2.5/ 2.3)	7.2	(8.5/ 7.2)
7 to 12 months	5.6	(2.5/ 6.2)	9.9	(4.0/12.4)
1 and < 2 years	4.6	(5.9/11.5)	16.6	(21.3/17.5)
2 and < 3 years	4.6	(6.9/10.4)	3.6	(11.9/ 9.3)
3 and < 4 years	10.2	(3.0/ 6.3)	9.4	(8.5/ 4.1)
4 and < 5 years	4.5	(6.9/ 8.3)	2.5	(9.5/ 6.2)
5 and < 9 years	20.5	(30.7/20.8)	10.7	(12.4/14.4)
9 years or more	37.5	(37.1/29.2)	14.2	(7.5/13.4)
	100.0 %		100.0 %	

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Pay

In contrast to Northland and the Bay of Plenty, the majority (55%) of the Otago/Southland loggers surveyed worked on piece-rate. Corresponding figures for the Bay of Plenty and Northland were 13% and 39% respectively. Two-thirds were paid fortnightly (82% / 47%). Like the other regions, a quarter of Otago/Southland loggers were paid a bonus.

The average "take-home" pay per fortnight was \$735 (\$730 / \$750), and ranged from \$300 to \$1500. While average earnings were clearly similar across the regions, the range for Otago/Southland was larger than that for either the Bay of Plenty (\$440 to \$1007) or Northland (\$400 to \$1100). Noting that no adjustments to award rates have occurred since the earlier surveys were conducted, the distributions of fortnightly take-home pay for the three regions are shown in Figure 2.

In both Otago/Southland and Northland there were a disproportionate number of workers in the lower pay range. While it could be argued that the high of \$1500 would seriously effect the mean, only one worker reportedly earned this amount and the removal of this observation only reduces the mean by \$11.00 per fortnight. It should be stressed that this information includes tax free allowances, such as that for a chainsaw.

Hours of Work and Travel Time

The time spent on the job and travelling to work varied little between the three areas. The average period "on the job" was 8.9 hours (8.1 / 8.9), with a range of 7 to 12 hours (6.5 to 10 hrs / 6 to 10 hrs). The average time spent travelling each day was 1.2 hours (1.4 / 1) implying an average working day of 10.1 hours (9.5 / 9.9). Fewer loggers in the Otago/Southland area had their travel time paid separately 39% (90% / 46%) - a reflection of the piece-rate payment system.

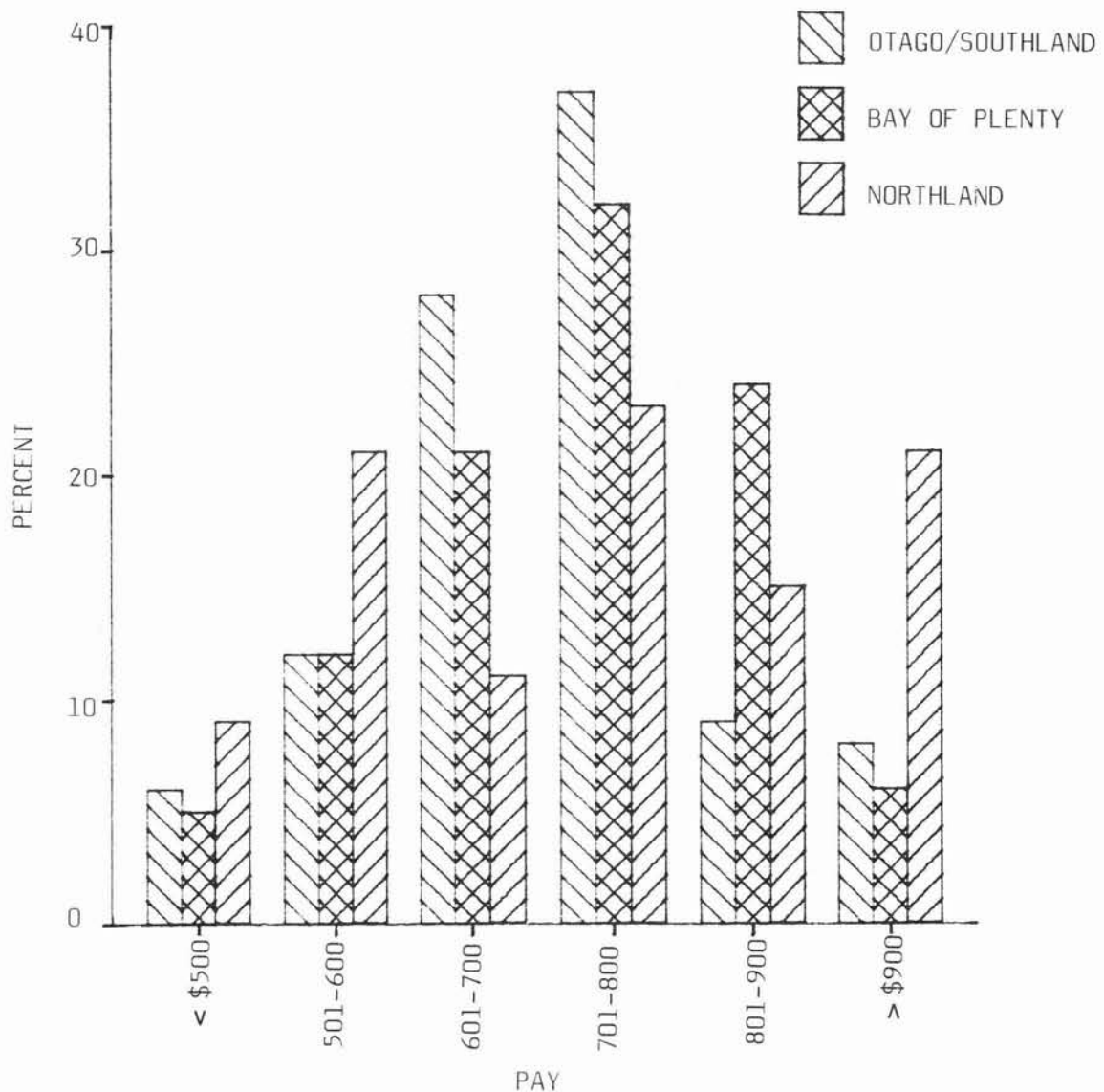


Figure 2 - Fortnightly Take-home Pay

RECRUITMENT — OPPORTUNITIES AND RETENTION

Recruitment

In accord with the other two areas, the main reason given by Otago/Southland loggers for working in logging (Figure 3) was the attraction of working outdoors. In keeping with loggers in other parts of the country, the second most frequently offered reason was that logging was the only job available. Following this, pay was cited as a factor drawing people into logging. Such an observation is a little at odds with data collected from the other two areas where "a change" was the third most commonly stated reason for being in the industry.

In keeping with their Bay of Plenty and Northland counterparts, most Otago/

Southland loggers obtained their first job through personal contact such as a relative or friend. Only 8% (10% / 7%) got their first job through answering an advertisement.

A job being available was the most common reason given by loggers for working in their present gang. One third (36% / 25%) of those spoken to fell into this category. The other prime reason was that they had "asked" for the job (15%) - a figure similar to that found for the Bay of Plenty (12%). However, in Northland, "a change" was the second most offered reason for being in their present gang (12%).

Forestry (including logging) and agricultural work were the two most common jobs loggers had upon leaving school (Table 2), making this region consistent with the other two areas.

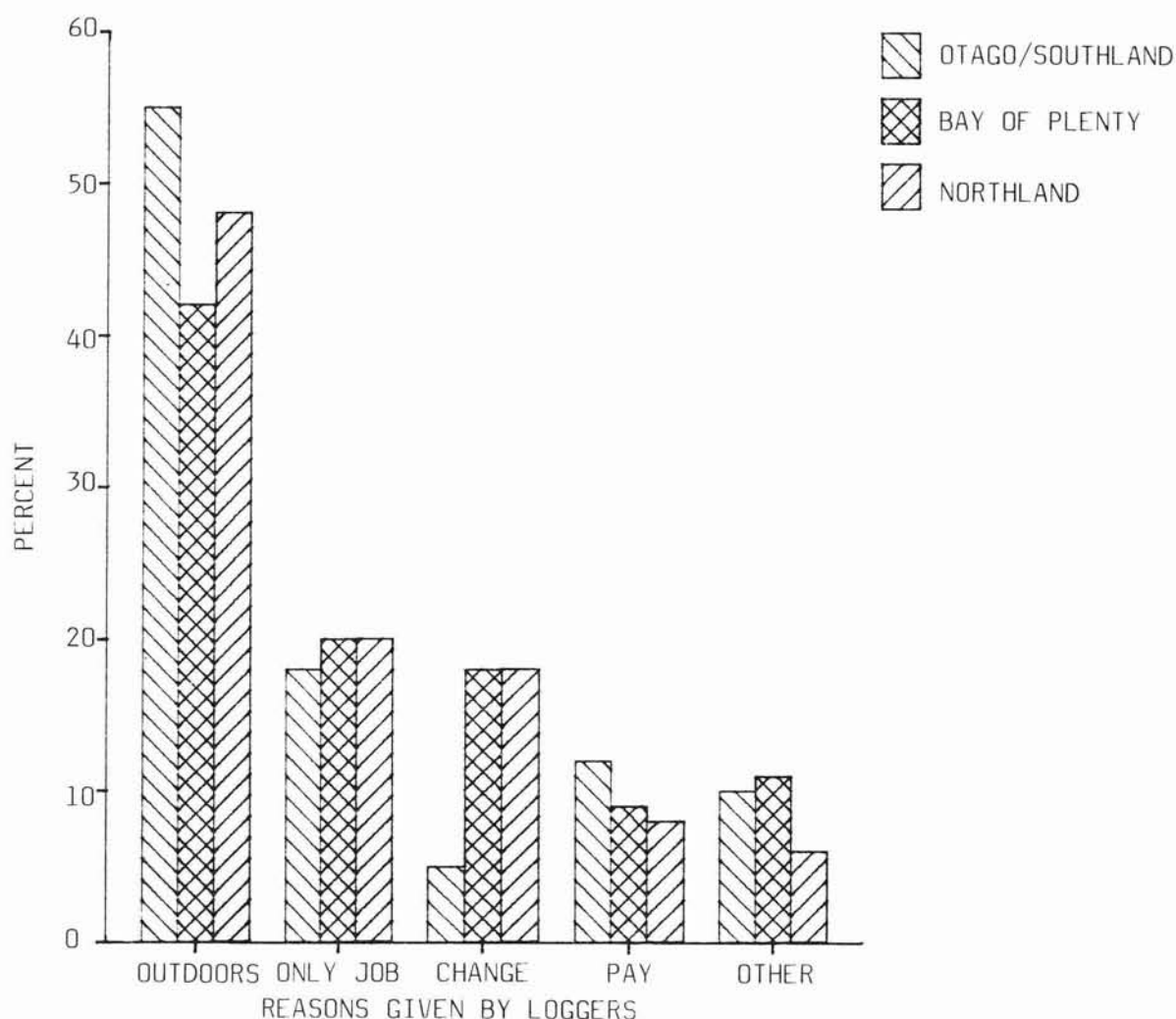


Figure 3 - Main Reason for Working in Logging

Opportunity in Logging for School Leavers

It would appear, however, that fewer Otago/Southland loggers actually began their working life in logging. There was more evidence of ex-woodsman trainees working in logging in Otago/Southland with 10% (2% / 1%) of respondents saying that their first job had been as a woodsman trainee.

The majority of loggers 63% (62% / 71%), felt there was ample opportunity for school leavers in the logging industry. Eighty-seven percent (88% / 83%) felt that the recruitment of school leavers could be improved by some formal training being available to people prior to their starting in the industry.

Table 2 : Father's Occupation and Respondent's First Job after Leaving School

	Father's Occupation		Respondent's First Job	
	Otago/ Southland	(Bay of Plenty/ Northland)	Otago/ Southland	(Bay of Plenty/ Northland)
	%	%	%	%
Forestry	8.1	(5.4/ 8.3)	19.0	(9.0/ 1.0)
Logging	22.1	(34.3/25.0)	4.8	(20.8/11.5)
Agriculture	20.9	(23.4/33.3)	27.4	(30.1/34.4)
Other	48.9	(36.9/33.4)	48.8	(40.1/53.1)

Retention

Only one-third of the loggers questioned indicated that they would still be in logging in five years time. This is a much lower proportion than that seen in either the Bay of Plenty or Northland, where one-half said that they would still be working in the industry after the same period. This observation could be attributed to a more uncertain future for the industry in the Otago/Southland area.

WORK SKILLS AND JOB PREFERENCES

Approximately 90% had experience in felling and trimming, breaking out, and skid work.

As with the Bay of Plenty and Northland, felling was the most preferred job. The main reasons given for this were "the greater challenge" and that the job "kept the logger busy" or "was interesting". Again, this result is similar to that for the other two areas.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the objectives of the Logging Workforce Survey was to determine if there is a "typical logger". Having now interviewed 390 loggers (16% of the total workforce), it seems that while the three areas were very different in terms of geographical setting, numbers employed, and volumes produced, the basic characteristics of those employed were remarkably similar.

The average age of those employed in logging varied little between areas, being five to six years younger than that for the remainder of the male workforce. A person employed in logging will only spend between five and eight years in that occupation, during which time they will have worked in two to three different crews.

However, a major regional discrepancy existed in the method of payment of loggers. While the majority of the Bay of Plenty loggers were paid wages (86%), the proportion paid on a piece-rate or sub-contract system was significantly higher in both Northland (39%) and Otago/Southland (55%). This notwithstanding the average fortnightly take

home pay was remarkably similar for all three areas at between \$730 and \$750.

At some stage in the next twenty years, the annual harvest from New Zealand exotic forests is expected to increase from the current level of 10 million m³ to in excess of 20 million m³. To achieve this expansion more people will have to be encouraged into the workforce. From the recruitment view point, the findings of the survey are particularly important as they provide, for the first time, an idea as to the background of those finding their way into the logging workforce. Future recruitment programmes should be organised with this sort of information in mind. For example :

- Half of those working in logging do so because of the attraction of working outdoors.
- Thirty percent of those interviewed started their working career on a farm.
- A further 25% started working in either forestry or logging.
- The traditional method of recruiting through advertising in the newspaper is seldom used to employ loggers and the majority get their first job through personal contact.
- The majority (between 60 and 70%) felt there was ample opportunity for school leavers in the logging industry. This view, however, was qualified by the very strong support for the establishment of formal training for school leavers.

REFERENCES

Gaskin, J.E.; Smith, B.N.P.; Wilson, P.A. (1987): "1986/7 Logging Workforce Survey (Preliminary Results from the Bay of Plenty)", LIRA Report, Vol.12 No.2.

Wilson, P.A.; Smith, B.N.P.; Gaskin, J.E. (1987) "The Logging Workforce in Northland - (A Comparison with the Bay of Plenty)", LIRA Report, Vol.12 No.12.

For further information, contact:

N.Z. LOGGING INDUSTRY RESEARCH ASSOC. INC.
P.O. Box 147,
Rotorua, New Zealand.

Telephone: (073) 87-168