

96. *Mr. Field.*] We had it in evidence that you could land it at something like 11s., and that you could put ordinary building rimu in Dunedin at about the same price—rather less, 6d. or 1s. less?—I do not think you could if they charge the same as we are being charged here.

97. Apparently there is not more than 1s. difference between the cost of landing Oregon and rimu in Dunedin?—I do not suppose there is.

98. Would you think that Oregon is worth 1s. per hundred more than rimu taken all through?—It is worth more than that for certain classes of work, even for joisting. You can do with one-third less in size for strength, which reduces the cost.

99. Of course, we all admit we must have Oregon here in large sizes, but, putting the two side by side, you say there is more than 1s. difference between them?—For certain classes of general work, I should say it would pay a builder to give more than that.

100. Do you not think, if that is so, that Oregon would be more largely used to supplant our rimu?—In certain districts it will, but if you have got to rail it it will not. You have still got a handicap there. As well as the duty they charge rate and a half to rail Oregon, so that you can only land it at that price at probably four centres in the Dominion, where they can bring direct shipments.

101. It comes direct to Timaru, I understand, and other smaller ports?—It may there, but they could not land it here.

102. Is it your opinion that it is never likely to compete with our rimu?—Oh, it will, because the rimu will get scarcer. That is what the large increase in the cost means.

103. Have you any knowledge of what is going on north?—I know that there is more Oregon used there than here.

104. You have seen it used?—I have seen it, but I have not been using it myself.

105. You say it is affecting our rimu trade here?—Very little.

106. Not even in Wellington?—It is the quiet times that are affecting it.

107. Do you not think that that is the very time our industry wants protecting?—You see, the times are very quiet all over, and the 2s. duty upon it would not stop it from coming in. If things are going bad on the other side, they have got an immense output, and they have got to send it away somewhere. It is better to send it away than keep it stacked until it gets rotten. It would be far better if some millers emptied their yards instead of keeping the timber stacked till it gets rotten.

108. Assuming that we have had it in evidence that Oregon is going to largely affect our saw-milling trade, what is going to become of our rimu trade—what are we going to do with it?—It is quite evident that we have not got much of it about by the evidence you have got.

109. I mean in other parts of the country?—It is increasing rapidly.

110. You will be cut out in fifteen years' time?—A good deal of it has been burnt down in the north?

111. What is going to become of it?—If they cannot produce it at a reasonable price, what are you to do?

112. Better to burn it?—Then tax the whole community for it. If you have to increase the cost of building operations you are taxing the whole community, and it affects the worker.

113. I am not an advocate of timber going up in price. Do you not think it will be a great misfortune if our rimu timber were burned?—Well, I think that if instead of being burned it were supplied at a cheap rate it would be all right.

114. If it cannot be milled profitably?—It becomes a luxury then.

115. *Mr. Leyland.*] You tell us that you paid twenty years ago 3s. 9d. per hundred for rough timber carted six miles?—Yes. I might explain that a little bit fuller. There was a mill there—one of McCallum's. They also had a mill at Longbush. They took one wagon-load of timber from Invercargill to the site, and then went for the second load from their Longbush mill, making two loads a day.

116. What do you estimate it was worth?—I am giving you the time, the time it would take to do two trips. He carted his load in the morning from the town mill, delivered that on the job, and then went from the job to Longbush mill, and brought back a second load, and then came on with the wagon. That was a day's work.

117. You are not charged for the tongue or feather, nor for the timber that was planed away in dressing?—No.

118. You got that for nothing?—Well, I cannot say Yes to that, because I suppose they reckoned that when they quoted the price.

119. You tell us you got the feather, which was not measured in?—It has not been measured in until the last rise, two years ago.

120. You have always had that given to you for nothing as far as measurement is concerned?—Yes.

121. That would be cheap enough for you?—Yes, 3s. 9d. was cheap enough at that time.

122. Do you think that 3s. 9d. was a fair price with cartage six miles?—I did not tender for it. It was given voluntarily. They thought it was a fair price when they gave it to me. From what I can make out, they did not lose any money at that time.

123. They did not get standing timber for nothing?—They had to pay 3d. per hundred at that time.

124. Can you tell us the difference between a five-roomed cottage then and to-day?—About £50 or £60, but I have not gone into that.

125. Do you think it is any wonder that a rise has taken place in twenty years?—I think the rise has been too much.

126. You do not think timber ought not to have risen?—I believe it costs more, but I do not think it costs the amount that they state.