

say that cannot be done?—It has not been tried here. I question very much if we could. Our timber is cheaper than it is in Wellington, but the cement would be more.

174. In quoting the price of timber twenty years ago, are you quoting the same figures as those given by Professor Kirk in the report published by him?—I was not aware of his report.

175. He published a report on the timber of New Zealand, and he quotes in this district the same prices as you have quoted, going down as low as 4s. 6d. and 3s. 9d. in one case?—He did not get his information from me.

176. I understand that the information you have given us is your own practical experience?—Yes, and I have shown the quotations that I have here.

177. It coincides exactly with the official report of Professor Kirk on the same subject?

178. *Hon. the Chairman.*] His report was obtained from stamped receipts?—The secretary has a copy of the quotations I gave.

179. *Mr. Barber.*] With regard to the extra price for the erection of a five- or six-roomed cottage, you said that it cost about £60 a room?—An increase of about £50 or £60 on the timber.

180. Mr. Field, in calculating the additional cost in proportion to the number of feet that was used in the erection of a building, referred to ordinary building-timber?—Yes. Mr. Clarke, I think, asked the question.

181. It seemed to me that 4s. was the increase for the last ten years on ordinary building-timber?—I think if it was worked out that all the increases would very nearly double that.

182. *Mr. Ell.*] With regard to the cost to the timber-merchant in yarding his timber, how is it there is timber rotting in the yards here?—The way it is stacked at the mills—no air gets to it.

183. It is due to the way it is stacked?—Yes, the bottom of the stack.

184. Could that be put down to carelessness in management or incompetence?—No, I do not think it could. They stack it that way when things are good, and they get it away before it gets rot; but at the present time when things are slack the stocks are getting larger, and naturally they take off the top, and the bottom is left till it gets pretty bad, instead of selling it at a lesser price, which I think would pay them.

185. You think the loss and waste in yarding may be minimised or reduced considerably if more care was exercised in storing it?—I think they might.

186. So that it is due to want of care in that respect?—When things are slack, mostly.

187. How is the timber stacked in the yards here?—In the yards in town there are generally roofs for them, but the bulk of the timber here comes direct from the mills, and not from the yards.

188. You said it would be far better for the timber-merchants to sell at a lower price than to hold on to their lots of timber?—That is at the sidings.

189. Then, you mean the millers and not the timber-merchants?—They are practically the same here.

190. Then a miller at the siding or the timber-merchant loses a great deal in carelessness in not taking proper care?—I do not call it want of proper care. It is the stacking and holding the stocks to keep the price up. I believe they could deal with a good deal of that at a lesser price.

191. Then, surely the waste consequent upon the method of stacking would be saved if stored in a better condition?—Yes, that would mean more money. It would pay them better to sell it direct from the mill at a lesser cost.

192. But I want to get at the waste, and see whether we cannot adopt some better method and put a stop to it?—Yes.

193. You say you have a difficulty in obtaining seasoned timber for building purposes?—Yes, at times. So far as joists are concerned, we do not get it seasoned.

194. Why not?—Because it comes direct off the saw to us.

195. And do the timber-merchants never store it a sufficient length of time to get it seasoned?—The general way here is that you may sign a contract to-day, and you have got to have all the timber stacked on the ground within so many days. Probably the whole of that timber has to be cut and run at the mill before it is delivered there.

196. Is that likely to help in the timber lasting if it goes into the building in a green state?—No, it has the opposite effect.

197. What is the effect of putting green timber into a building?—It makes a wonderful difference to the building: you have shrinkage over the building, and that is where the Oregon pine is a great advantage in roof-work, because if you have it dry the joists are good, whereas the local timber comes away.

198. A building of four or five rooms erected with good seasoned timber—would that last longer than a building erected with green timber?—Well, I believe it would.

199. Then, in your opinion, if timber was better seasoned it would mean a public gain?—I think that would mean more money—they would want more money for it.

200. You have to stand the racket?—We have to stand the racket, and we put everything on to the builder. If the stuff is all green it is the builder's fault—the architect looks to the builder.

201. Why is not beech used down here for building purposes?—Well, I have not had much experience in beech. It twists about too much, I think, for ordinary building purposes. I have seen it used up in the lakes district for weatherboards, but you have to be very careful with it, because on a warm day you may lay a board down and go and have lunch, and when you come back it would have turned a circle.

202. That is why you do not use it?—I take it that is the principle! reason that it is not allowed to be used.

203. If properly seasoned would it curl like that?—I have not had any experience with it. It may be all right if cut at the proper time in the log.