

the conclusion that it would be cheaper to use a steel truss than to use Oregon for the heavy stuff, and red-pine for the lighter.

7. *Mr. Hanan.*] Do you think it is desirable to increase the duty on Oregon pine?—No, I do not think it is.

8. You think it is not in the interest of the Dominion?—If any alteration were made, I think, if anything, it should be reduced on the heavy stuff, because the Dominion cannot produce large barks of timber. If any alteration were made, heavy Oregon should rather be reduced. It may be that on small sizes it would be advisable to make some small increase, but I think to increase the duty on heavy stuff would be a great mistake. We must have heavy timber for certain classes of work, and it is practically admitted that the mills cannot supply it.

9. *Mr. Jennings.*] You mean local millers?—I am speaking, of course, of local millers.

10. *Mr. Hanan.*] You think an export duty should be placed on our timber?—I am strongly of opinion it should be on red-pine and totara, and I think the whole trouble is caused by our timber being given away in past years. I cannot give you the returns, but we all know it was shipped very largely to Australia up to the time that Oregon came into competition. Our birth-right was given away for very little return, and we have undoubtedly to pay for that in the increased cost of the timber. As regards increased production, that is easily understood, because originally all the flat country around Invercargill was under bush, but it has all been cut out. Seaward Bush was the last; that has all been cut out, and we are not getting the same class now. It was cleaner timber for rough purposes, but what we are getting from the western districts is far more durable, and is beautiful timber. Take the mouldings in this room: we would not take such mouldings now for a job; we get beautiful figured timber all around Invercargill. That is due to going to the hilly country; it is more durable, and we get a more beautiful grain, but I certainly think there should be an export duty on our timber to keep it in the country. I think also it would be a wise thing to provide for replanting wherever it is cut out. In Germany, Norway, and Sweden the law enforces planting for every tree that is cut, and I want to see that done here. There is a timber shortage all over the world, and the cost of timber is greatly increasing. The main supplies in England now are being taken from America in place of Norway and Sweden. Californian redwood is undoubtedly better than Baltic for some purposes, and will come into competition with New Zealand timber in the near future. It is already used for venetian-blinds; it will not rot, and will not burn; and if you put it into the ground between wind and water it is durable. It is very little lighter than Oregon, and of a good colour, but is not suitable for heavy work. For building-work we shall see more of it used for sashes and doors. It is practically unshrinkable even if it is wet.

11. What woods do you find affected by the borer?—The borer, as we know, is peculiar to white-pine. I have never known a case of any other timber being affected by it except where it was in the vicinity of white-pine. I know one case of a mahogany piano being practically destroyed because it was in a house which had been built of white-pine. Of course, we often hear talk of dry-rot, and forget that it is common to nearly all timber under certain conditions. The white-pine borer is not the ordinary dry-rot at all. So far as I can learn, it is peculiar to that timber, but it will go into red-pine and other timbers if they are in the proximity of white-pine that has been affected.

12. Do you know of any methods or means that have been found satisfactory to destroy the borer?—Sometimes I have heard of turpentine being used. There have been one or two patent mixtures, no doubt, but the proper way to avoid the borer in a building is not to use white-pine, and it is not being used now.

13. Do you know of any effective destroyer or preservative?—No.

14. Have you much difficulty in getting red-pine here?—No serious difficulty for finishing-work; but, of course, we get timber now for rough purposes of an inferior class. At the time of the Seaward Bush we never got strips of bark of considerable length. At that time you saw all heart of totara, but it is scarcely procurable now; you do not get it.

15. What is your opinion regarding the importation of hardwoods?—As regards competition with local timber, I do not think that hardwood competes with local timber to any extent, unless it might be in railway-work. Of course, we should never use it for any ordinary work here; but the cost of totara is now so great that we would use jarrah in preference to it, because it is a far better wood in every respect. The only trouble with jarrah is that it takes two years to season for rough purposes and five years for joinery. Generally speaking, we prefer it to totara, and occasionally we specify it for totara.

16. Do you think all these hardwoods should be allowed to come in free?—I am hardly in a position to say that, but I do not think they should be increased in cost anyhow.

17. Is the building trade generally in a prosperous condition?—It is quiet just now—in some cases decidedly slack. Cottage-building has fallen off; it has almost stopped. At present it does not affect me very much, but I see many men idle.

18. There has been a boom in the building trade in Invercargill?—I do not think you can fairly call it a boom. We have very seldom had works stopped for want of men. There has been tightness of money and scarcity of labour. Things have not been prosperous, and you could not say more than that for them.

19. As to the workmen, how do they compare with those of ten years ago?—I believe there are fewer good joiners amongst the younger men, and I attribute that mainly to factory-work. Now, very few builders are in the habit of making their own sashes, and they scarcely ever make a door. At one time they had to make all that work and all the ordinary joinery. Such work is done almost entirely now by machinery in factories. Even builders are putting in machinery for mortising, and the effect among the workmen has been that you do not see so many competent men.