

on foreign sources of supply for its timber?—Yes, decidedly. That is why I mentioned that a tree should be planted for every one cut.

102. You think it should be renewed?—Yes, it should be renewed.

103. *Mr. Morris.*] In regard to this Oregon pine, do you know much about it?—No, I cannot pretend to have had any very wide experience of it. We have used it for the last five years or thereabouts mainly for heavy joists.

104. Have you had any with large knots running through it?—Sometimes, and same shaky, too.

105. Would you call that the top of the trees?—I should say that timber was cut well up the tree in view of the full size of the Oregon tree.

106. And the quality of the stuff?—Yes. It is not all one quality—there is no good denying that. We have had Oregon timber here 13 by 13 which was scarcely worth cutting up—it was so shaken and had arrived from Melbourne in that condition. Of course, the Oregon we use in Southland mainly comes from Melbourne, because it can be landed cheaper from the Bluff than from Wellington.

107. Have you ever tried any of the beech or birch that you have here in large quantities?—Yes, we are using it just now, and also a few years ago.

108. How does it compare with rimu?—I think it is a much more durable timber, but it has got a nasty habit of curling, and shrinks more, but it is certainly a much more durable timber. I saw one building built over forty years ago which had apparently never been painted, and I examined it, and found the plates about the place as sound as a bell. That was in the lakes district, and the timber was red-birch. I am now building a house for a client of mine costing some £1,600 or thereabouts, and he would not have any totara in the building except where I highly recommended it in the way of window-sills—the whole of his place is to be put up in birch. After his own experience he would not have a bit of totara in the job except where it was immaterial whether it split, which, of course, it is inclined to do.

109. In view of the fact of birch being brought into consumption for building-timber, will the timber-supply increase?—I think the timber-supply will be much more useful in the future. If birch is obtainable in Southland it has a future before it.

110. *Mr. Barber.*] In your experience, has the high price of building-materials interfered with the building trade?—Well, I do not think it has really seriously interfered with the building trade, because we have just been through a period of prosperity. Although I dispute that there has been what you may fairly call a boom, still, we have certainly been prosperous. I do not think many people have wanted buildings and had to go without them on account of that; but should we get a lengthened period of depression, I am quite sure that the largely increased cost of building will be seriously detrimental to the building trade. That is where we shall feel it. So long as we are prosperous I do not think it will make any great difference. I have not heard of people here being herded up in confined quarters or being inconvenienced by present prices. Money has been cheap, and things generally prosperous. I think it is too soon yet to say, but probably the slackness is due to that, as well as the scarcity of money.

111. You mean the scarcity of money or the high price of timber?—Both.

112. And, of course, you realise that if the timber industry or building trade is slack a large number of the artisans are unemployed?—Yes, and it is very far-reaching.

113. Do you not think that when the timber was very plentiful here that was the time to put the duty on the imported article, and now that the timber is getting scarce and very difficult to obtain, do you not think that that is a reason why we should be a little more reasonable in our restrictions with regard to the imported article?—Well, of course, while timber is plentiful it is cheap.

114. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Not always?—It is practically so with us. While timber was plentiful with us it was on the flat country, but now they have to go to the hilly country, and very soon will have to go to the mountain country.

115. *Mr. Barber.*] Do you not think, as the timber here is getting scarce, and as you say the imported article is equal to the local timber, that we should allow the imported article to come here?—Well, of course, if you can do it without crippling the local industry it would be all right. It has to be shown whether it would really be fair to the local industry.

116. Do you think that, if the cost of timber is high owing to the disadvantages of procuring it, rents are to be kept up to an exorbitant price and the building trade restricted?—I do not think it has come to that. If it went any higher, I say Yes. I think it is as high now as it can fairly stand.

117. Have you any reason for believing that it is at the maximum height?—No; I think it is more likely to rise again in the future—it stands to reason it must. When they go out beyond Waiau in this district there will be greater haulage, and that is not its limit then.

118. Do you think that if timber is likely to go any higher it would be fair to impose this additional cost on the workers who pay the rent?—It would be simply a question which affected the major number of people from a national point of view.

119. *Mr. Ell.*] In your experience as an architect, is any of the imported timber taking the place of the rimu and kauri for the inside work?—No, I do not think so. There is no timber at a reasonable price that would fairly take its place. They work more easily, but not more so than kauri; but we use very little kauri. I think we can land Oregon cheaper here than kauri.

120. Of course, kauri is practically cut out?—Yes. Of course, rimu is better than Oregon for finish. It is firmer altogether in the grain, and it has a beautiful polish where Oregon has not.

121. And you think no imported timber takes the place of it for that work?—No, not at a reasonable cost.

122. You have no doubt seen the extent to which rimu is used in our furniture-factories?—Yes.