

123. Is there any imported timber to come up to it at anything like the price?—I do not think there is. I am personally very fond of rimu. I think it is one of the most beautiful timbers in the world, and I think we greatly underrate its true value for good work. It is often a great pity to see the beautiful figured stuff put into joists and other roof-stuff, and buried in a building where it is absolutely lost—it is a material which is fit for any pianomaking.

124. Having regard to the fact that it is necessary to consider the more permanent industries of the country—that is, woodworking and furniture-making, and so forth—do you think it is necessary that we should make some permanent reserves so as to perpetuate the supply for our standard industries?—I think it would be a very wise thing to do. Such a thing never occurred to me, because the day will undoubtedly come when timber will be almost unprocurable.

125. And you know of no timber so well suitable at the price?—No.

126. Now, in regard to beech. I refer to this because it is the quickest-growing—it will reproduce itself?—You are referring to the red-birch?

127. Yes. Do you think, if it were cut at the right time only—that is, during the winter, when the sawmillers themselves say it is not liable to shrink and warp—that that would help to put it on the market with a better character?—Yes, I think it would. Of course, on the other hand, it is almost impossible and hopeless to expect to get it cut in the winter only. It would not pay the miller to run a mill only for winter cutting. We cut the whole year round, and the only way to control it is for the individual who builds to time his building so that he may get winter-cut timber.

128. But you say that on account of the twisting and warping it is practically useless for building purposes?—No, I do not say so—decidedly not. I told you of two cases where we recently had it used with very gratifying results, but I still say it shrinks and warps more than red-pine does, and it also has a tendency to split in cases like window-sills and heavy material, which, of course, is a serious detriment to the building.

129. If it were properly seasoned, do you think it would?—For ordinary framing-work I think it is suitable and more durable than red-pine.

130. A miller has told me that it is better in damp situations?—Yes.

131. In regard to seasoned and unseasoned timber, speaking as an architect, is a building likely to last longer built with seasoned timber than a building built of green timber?—Yes, decidedly. That is common knowledge.

132. And it lengthens the life of a house?—In the case of ordinary cottages you get your timber on to the job and up-end it, and it is generally sufficiently seasoned when you come to construct your building.

133. How long does it take to season the timber?—It varies according to the season. With large joists it takes longer. What I said applied to 4 by 2 for the construction of framed houses. Such stuff seasons quite sufficiently, and you would never detect the shrinkage if it is a given a fair chance.

134. You told us that in this town, as large as it is, you found a difficulty in obtaining 1,000 ft. of seasoned timber?—Yes, very difficult. It would not be so at this moment, but that would generally be the case. At this moment there is a slackness.

135. The millers do not seem to cater for the demand for seasoned timber?—I understand it does not pay them with the double handling.

136. I have here price-lists of experienced sawmillers and timber-merchants in Christchurch, and the difference in the price of seasoned southern red-pine is 1s. per hundred feet?—That is in Christchurch; but then you are not in a timber-producing district there—they have to store it; and this is a timber-producing district. It is like going to the Bluff to buy fish. You cannot buy it retail: it is sent away in big orders, and it would not pay them to hold it, and likewise it would not pay our millers to stack the timber and season it here. I have given you the reason why the architects do not insist upon its being bought seasoned. It is not necessary, and the clients will not wait. They come to you and want a building put up. You have to hurry and get it done; and the stuff is growing in the bush. You know the heavy joists will shrink and give trouble, and our only way is to use one timber for the purpose.

137. And from a public standpoint it is a matter of economy to use Oregon as against green timber?—Yes.

138. I find that the difference here in red-pine 6 in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in. unmatched lining is 6d. per hundred feet?—That is between seasoned and green.

139. Do you think it is too costly for timber-merchants to season timber in view of the small difference there is between the two?—You are quoting Christchurch.

140. Why should it cost more to have it seasoned here?—Because here they do not stack it, but there they have to. They must stack it or it is detrimental to the timber.

141. But if it only costs them 6d. there to season it, why should it cost more here?—Because they have to stack it there. The fact remains that we do not do it. A miller will stack the timber for you, but I understand it is a matter of arrangement between the two to save the builder the trouble of putting it on another site.

142. Evidence has been adduced here to try and show that timber-merchants cannot afford to season the timber properly?—Yes, I do not think they can in Southland.

143. With regard to preserving our timber-supply and the export duty, the quantity of timber exported in 1895 was 191,000,000 ft., and in 1907 432,000,000 ft. In view of that increase in twelve years, do you think, with the increasing demand for timber as the population increases, that the industry should be put on a better footing?—Yes, I think so. It is a pity it was not done twenty years ago.