

35. What does it amount to—20 or 25 per cent.?—It all depends upon the kind of building. Here in my own hands now I have one with a $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. brick wall outside.

36. I mean a wooden building altogether?—Weatherboards? It all depends on the size of the building. Do you mean a four-roomed house?

37. Say the average cottage building for a working-man, with four rooms, a scullery, and bathroom?—You must have a bathroom now according to the by-laws of the town. Say from £90 to £100

38. What would be the value of the cottage when finished—the building alone?—£350, probably.

39. That is not much more than 25 per cent. when all is said and done?—The average cost of the timber on a wooden building is about 30 to 33 per cent.

40. *Mr. Barber.*] Do you mean increased cost?—No, the total cost of the timber. The rest is taken up by ironmongery, bricks, conveniences, piping, and so forth.

41. You say that the conveniences that are insisted upon by the municipality add to the cost of the house?—Yes.

42. But, comparing the price of timber to-day with what obtained ten years ago in regard to style, would there be any increase in the cost of erecting it?—They did not have those by-laws then.

43. But supposing you were asked to erect the same style of cottage where the by-laws did not prevail?—Yes, I had an experience of that kind twelve months ago. For the same plan of fourteen years ago I made it £400, and at that time it was £227 for the same style of house. I did not get the job all the same.

44. Do you believe that slackness of trade in the building line is due to the high price of material?—I would not say that. Of course, you know the money-market is a bit tight; people cannot borrow so easily, and living is a bit higher.

45. They can borrow, but they have to borrow more to build a house?—And they have to pay a higher rate of interest. In some cases unless they are very good marks they might have a job to get the money.

46. Do you think it is a good investment to build houses with the present material?—There are some. I met a man some time back with plenty of money, and I asked him if he was going to put up any more houses. He said things were too high now. He did not say timber, but he meant that the cost of building was too much money.

47. *Mr. EU.*] With regard to the price, you were saying just now that you thought millers could come down on certain lines of timber?—Yes.

48. I want to know whether the prices here have gone up the same as in Christchurch?—No.

49. Take glass doors?—Of course, doors have increased very much in value during the last ten years.

50. Glass doors in Christchurch in 1894, 2 ft. 8 in. by $1\frac{3}{4}$ in., was £1 2s. The price now is £1 10s.?—Well, I know that about sixteen years ago I had as much as 25 per cent. discount on doors, and the prices are much higher now.

51. What is the discount on doors now?—5 per cent.

52. Ordinary glass doors in Christchurch, 2 ft. 6 in. by $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. kauri, cost 9s. in 1894. In 1904 they cost 15s., or an increase of 6s. The builders can make them very much cheaper themselves.

53. You do not think that difference is altogether justified?—It is justified with kauri doors, as kauri is much dearer nowadays. But it seems a very high advance.

54. Flooring, 7 and 8, 6 in. by 1 in., in 1894 was 11s. 9d. a hundred, now it stands at 18s. 6d. for red-pine. In your experience do you think that increase is justified?—Not so much as that. In 1895 it was 7s. 6d. for other lines, and now it is 15s. There is one thing I notice—the sawmillers stock their timber here, and they charge 1s. per hundred for seasoned timber.

55. They charge 2s. per hundred for seasoning in Christchurch?—Yes.

56. With regard to seasoned or unseasoned, what is your opinion?—Of course, I prefer the seasoned timber.

57. What would be the difference in the cost?—It would pay a man to have seasoned timber every time.

58. I understand you to say that the difference in the cost is not very much?—Not very much.

59. How many thousand feet would you require for a four-roomed cottage?—It would take fully 10,000 ft. of timber. I think it would be wise on the part of an owner to have thoroughly seasoned timber.

60. It would be thoroughly economical?—Yes. Even if you scrim and paper over rough work you will find the scrim bagging, whereas if it were dry timber that would not be so, and it would last.

61. Would it be a good thing in the interests of the public to do anything in the way of enforcing the seasoning of timber?—It would be for the benefit of the public if the architects were induced to specify that all timber be seasoned thoroughly. It would be more satisfactory to the owner and also to the builder.

62. Have you any difficulty in obtaining seasoned timber in this town?—We generally get it direct from the mill, and stack it as soon as possible.

63. *Mr. Arnold.*] It is not the usual thing to specify for timber to be seasoned?—No, only for certain work.

64. When it is not so specified, and tenders are called for, are they supposed to put in green timber?—No; they are supposed to give it as long a chance as they can.

65. The point is, if there is a difference of £5 in the cottage owing to the seasoning?—Well, it all depends on the conditions. If a man puts in a tender, and intends to put in thoroughly