

seasoned timber, unless he mentions it the architect would not know, and the other man gets the advantage.

66. So that any desire to use seasoned timber only, which is not likely, I presume, is for the proprietor to specify?—Yes, that would mean that the sawmillers would have to keep fairly large stocks. There is no doubt that a lot of timber has been wasted at the bottom of the stacks, because they always take the top of the stack and the bottom is left.

67. Everything is taken from the raw without being thoroughly matured?—It is so with regard to timber, I know. In regard to furniture, I think they season it very well.

68. Is it not a fact that the only cure for this would be by a very much larger output and larger stocks, and much larger capital than at present?—Yes, unless they become a monopoly and bump up the prices as high as possible.

69. Could the small mills afford to stack the timber for one or two years?—I think it would pay them at 1s. per hundred.

70. Everything would depend on the specification?—Yes. If a man was to order seasoned timber we should have to supply it.

71. Can you give us a suggestion as to how to bring it about?—I think the people want to be educated up to that kind of thing.

72. Would municipal by-laws cover it: do you suggest municipal interfering?—That might interfere with the liberty of the subject. It is different from a question of sanitation. Of course, it could be done by municipal control.

73. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] How long does it take to season red-pine for building purposes?—It ought to be twelve months, but it would dry very well in three or four months.

74. Could a man not get the timber himself and have it seasoned—that is, keep it on the job for a time seasoning?—There is nothing to prevent him. Builders do not like that, however, although there are plenty of ways to do it. They have only to pay an extra price. I have known people to get the timber on the ground for six months before the house was put up.

75. *Mr. Field.*] You told us the cost of rimu in 1900 was 6s. 9d. Then you said, in nine years it had gone to about 9s.?—It is 10s. 6d. now.

76. You said, just after 1900 there was a sudden rise because of the association. Therefore in 1901 it was selling at more than 6s. 9d.?—It was 8s. 6d., I think—it went up by a big rise.

77. I want to show that Mr. Brent is right?—Two years ago there was a little bit of a split with the sawmillers, and we got the benefit of it by a 12½-per-cent. discount. It was only 9s. 6d. then.

78. Mr. Clarke, in asking you a question, suggested that the millers were getting £1 10s. for what cost them 10s.?—I did not work it out. It is easily worked out.

79. What would they be worth now?—Two-inch dado moulding, 11s.; rough timber would cost them about 1s. 9d. It certainly counterbalances the small profit of 1s. a hundred.

80. *Mr. Leyland.*] How much do you estimate for the running—for 100 ft. lineal?—I do not suppose it costs very much to run through that—say 9d.

81. In 100 ft. super. there are 6 ft. running?—This 100 ft. is solid lineal.

82. You told us before it would come to £1 10s. super.?—It would come to more than that—it would come to £3.

83. *Mr. Field.*] Would you as a builder pay 2s. a hundred more, or any other sum, for seasoned timber than for timber just cut?—Only 1s. a hundred is required here.

84. Would you be prepared to pay 1s. a hundred?—If I were building a house for myself, yes.

85. But if you were building a house for me, and I did not contract for seasoned timber?—I would do the same as other people—get it as dry as I could.

86. You said you believed in conserving the timber. Supposing you are the owner of 500 acres of timber country, and it is fit for farming as well, and for some reason or other you are forced to conserve it, what are you going to do if you are a poor man and you are forced to tie it up?—I do not think that is likely to occur. It should be a State job.

WILLIAM STEAD SWORN and examined. (No. 9.)

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What are you?—A furniture-maker. I do not think I can give you much information in connection with what the Commission really wants to know, because Oregon pine does not affect our trade, and the various prices you have been told about by the sawmillers. There has been a slight increase in the price of timber to what it was a few years ago. I suppose, in the furniture trade it is from 10s. a hundred up to 18s. The increase has been mostly in wide timber. I am speaking from memory when I say that 12s. 6d. was a good price for 12 by 1, and 18s. 6d. dressed.

2. Do you think that was too much?—We have got used to it, and it is the ordinary price. Of course, we would much prefer it to be lower, but the quantity I use is not extra great, and with the combine in the timber business it means you cannot get it any cheaper, and therefore you have to pay it. The association fixes the price, and if you can get it at the mills outside the association you will get a discount of 15 or 17 per cent. off.

3. Can you get it at the outside mills at a cheaper rate?—Sometimes. The last lot I got cheaper than from the association..

4. Then the price is not ruled by the association?—They practically charge the same as the association charges, except that they take off 17½ per cent., including 5 per cent. for cash. The prices for the other timber for making furniture are fairly high, and I do not think it will compete with the local timber—I refer to the walnut and oak. I cannot say that we have used much birch here—it is nearly all red-pine. I do not consider the timber we get now is as good as we