

the timber is much scarcer. The only thing is that they are cutting trees now that they used to pass at one time; they have to do it. Where an area has been cut out they have started and gone through it again, so that they may make a little there.

30. Do you regard this beech as a first-class furniture-making timber for chairs?—I do not think you can beat it for chair-work; it is equal to walnut for durability and standing. Of course, the beauty of it is that it stands beautifully, and looks almost like walnut.

31. *Mr. Clarke.*] You said nothing could beat red-pine for furniture: by that you mean rimu, I presume?—Rimu when it is thoroughly seasoned. If it got the same course as the Home timber it would be equally as good.

32. By red-pine you mean rimu only?—Yes.

33. You say that in some of those orders they were selling a good proportion of miro?—In 2 by 1 and 4 by 1. You do not get any of that in 16 size.

34. Is that where the rascality creeps in—in sending you miro for red-pine?—When you get a little you do not mind, but it is a very hard timber, and you cannot drive nails in it the same way.

35. With regard to the suggestion that you are not bound to deal with the associated millers, do these people ever approach you seeking to do business, or do you have to approach them—those who do not belong to the association?—I do not know that they do. See, it would not pay them to go to bothering us, because we only take, perhaps once a year, about 20 pounds' worth or so, and it is eighteen months perhaps before you can use it.

36. You mostly deal with the associated millers?—Generally with them.

37. *Mr. Morris.*] You have just told us that you only take about 20 pounds' worth per annum?—At certain times—generally about the winter—and stack it up. That keeps us going.

38. When you can get it you want rimu chiefly for your work?—We do not order special timber now, because trade is different—because it is all mostly stained wood—in fact, we order it without figuring. There is not the demand for figured stuff there was.

39. You do not expect that the timber will be cut out in your day for all you require?—Not for the furniture, but I expect it to go much dearer.

40. It will be very difficult to get?—The further it gets away, and, of course, they are getting pretty far away now, and the part of the country is very rough—getting back to the hilly country.

41. Knowing the cost, you will select the class of timber for your work, and no rough timber at all?—No rough timber at all. It is all cut up and hand-dressed, and you must have the best.

42. You buy it green, and season it yourself?—Yes. Of course, we pay a little extra.

43. *Mr. Barber.*] You said the timber had gone up 8s. in twenty years?—Yes.

44. What knowledge have you got of the price twenty years ago?—The fact that I bought it.

45. At Invercargill?—Yes.

46. Do you know that a witness this afternoon produced stamped receipts showing that he had bought it for 4s. or 3s. 9d.?—I believe that.

47. And do you know that good timber was much easier to get then than now?—By a long way.

48. If the ordinary timber was 3s. 9d. twenty years ago, the timber you require for your work would be about 10s. for the 18 by 1 you require for your work?—I think it would be about that.

49. Do you know what Professor Kirk says about timber twenty years ago: He says first-class rimu for building purposes was loaded on railway-trucks at 4s. per 100 superficial feet. Do you think you really did pay 10s. 6d. for it twenty years ago?—Yes, I think so.

50. Therefore it seems that the difference then was a great deal more than the difference now, because ordinary building-timber was £1?—I think so.

51. Do you find any difficulty in competing with imported furniture?—Not unless they go in for the same kind of timber. The people are better off, and some of them like to get an oak or a walnut, and perhaps they are willing to pay a bit more for it. I think, in the ordinary run of things, the difference does not affect us.

52. You said that the increased price of production was caused by the rise in wages?—That is natural.

53. What machinery do you use?—I use machinery.

54. You have no more machinery than you had twenty years ago?—No.

55. Speaking on behalf of your trade, what machinery is used in Invercargill?—There are three factories here, and they use a large lot of machinery. Nearly all the ordinary stuff we get from the factory.

56. Is it not a fact that, in consequence of the machinery that is used to-day, the amount spent in labour, although there is an increased wage, is very much less proportionately than it was twenty years ago. I am speaking of the trade as a whole?—I could not say that.

57. Would you be surprised to know that it is so?—Of course, machinery puts it down, and gives you stuff we could not produce. I have not been into any of these up-to-date places. We could not make the stuff for the money. I am not surprised at what you state.