

81. It is not part of the Seaward Bush?—It is a continuation of the Seaward Bush all the same.
82. Is it not nearly east of Invercargill?—Perhaps a little to the north-east.
83. We were told that that bush—meaning Seaward Bush—was absolutely denuded of timber. There is still a timber area?—Yes.
84. Do you not think that Mr. Massey had an advantage by having a bush with a life of the extent of twenty years to run?—In sawmilling, you mean?
85. Yes?—Yes, of course, he has got an advantage in sawmilling; but I suppose he has got disadvantages in the expense of holding it so long.
86. With regard to the replanting of these areas, what do you think it would cost to plant, say, 100 acres?—I have never gone into that.
87. You could not say whether it would not be wiser to retain the forests we have at present than go to the expense of planting?—I would certainly say, Retain the forests that you have rather than go to the expense of planting.
88. *Mr. Ell.*] You have had about thirty years' experience in this district?—Yes.
89. During the whole of that period you have only known of one extensive fire to take place in virgin forest?—No, that was with regard to the destruction of timber by settlers. There was land taken up for settlement where they destroyed the sawmilling-timber. I have said that outside of that I have not known of any extensive quantity being destroyed by settlers.
90. You were asked with regard to fires in forests generally. I understood you to say that a beech forest was liable to burn in ordinary dry weather, but an ordinary mixed forest was not?—That is so.
91. That is your experience?—Yes, but not to any appreciable extent.
92. What is your position as Crown Lands Ranger? What are your duties, roughly?—Reporting sometimes on improvements by settlers; but my principal work is as timber expert for Southland—valuing bush lands—the timber on them—and, generally speaking, attending to the sawmilling areas, and reporting on the working of the different mills.
93. Attendance on Crown lands?—Yes.
94. Must you inspect all the different reserves from time to time that are under your control or supervision?—That is so.
95. Are you the only Crown Lands Ranger in the district?—No, there are three of us altogether.
96. Where does your district extend from?—From Chasland's on the coast-line north and north-west to Lake Wakatipu.
97. Is Stewart Island included?—Yes, and from about half-way up Lake Wakatipu in a line about straight west to the coast.
98. So you have an enormous area of country to cover?—That is so.
99. With regard to the beech, can you tell us, from your knowledge of it, whether it grows more rapidly than other New Zealand timbers?—Yes, compared with red-pine, beech grows very much more rapidly.
100. How long would you say?—I would not like to say.
101. What I want to get at is this: I noticed, the other day, a lot of very young trees about a foot long. How long would they take to come on?—I think about a hundred years.
102. Do they grow as slowly as that?—Well, you know, at 1 ft. thick they are almost fit to mill. I mean that in thirty years a tree a foot through would not gain more than 6 in.
103. Take a tree 6 in. through: how long would it take to reach the size of a foot through?—I do not think it would take quite as long.
104. Twenty years?—I should think probably about that time.
105. So that the younger trees 6 in. in diameter would become marketable timber—milling-timber—in about twenty-five years?—I dare say they would.
106. What about the land on which the beech grows? Is it good land?—Some of it is good, but as a rule it is rather indifferent land where beech or birch grows.
107. I want to know whether you think it would be wise to mill out the milling-timber on a large portion of the beech country, and leave the remainder to be used from time to time?—I fear not. I fear that once you allow a mill to go through it you give up all hopes of milling in that country again. In the first place, most of the young trees are destroyed by the falling of the timber in the working of the bush; and, in the next place, the bush takes up a different attitude after the timber is felled: it grows up a lot of scrub and different kinds of trees that prevent the growth of the larger trees.
108. So that you do not think it would pay?—I do not really.
109. I understood you to say that you considered it would be a wise policy to preserve our forests so as to conserve our native supply of timber for various industries?—That is with regard to settlement—not to allow any lands to be thrown open for settlement that contained milling-timber.
110. *Mr. Arnold.*] How many acres are there now in Southland connected with the various mills taken up at the present time?—I think I said something like 36,000 acres.
111. Can you tell us what length it will be before that is worked out?—I should say about twenty years.
112. Have you any experience of the Catlin's district?—Yes, a little.
113. Do you know anything about the area of bush land to be found there?—I cannot tell you the exact area, but there is a considerable extent of country there for sawmilling, if you go down at the back of Tautuku.
114. Two or three thousand acres?—Probably that.
115. What class of timber is to be found there?—Principally rimu.