

55. Now, supposing the manufacturers of furniture in New Zealand have to use imported timber, I am given to understand that some of the harder woods—oaks and so forth—run to about 8d. a foot?—More than that.

56. If the people had to depend upon imported timber of that character it would vastly increase the cost of furniture?—Yes.

57. Kauri and rimu are suited for that purpose?—Yes, rimu especially.

58. Because of its beautiful grain. I notice that the furniture in the homes in Christchurch is made almost exclusively from rimu?—No doubt.

59. Do you think, seeing that we shall have furniture-factories in this country for years to come, and that rimu is adapted for cabinet-work, that we should make some reserves for a steady supply, and thereby become independent of foreign importations for the purpose in question?—There is something in what you say, but I have not looked at it in that light. It looks as if something of the sort should be done. You see, there is such a small quantity of that rimu timber suitable for cabinetmaking work and for inside finishing, such as architraves, doors, and mantelpieces. If you are to reserve the bush you would not be able to get sufficient suitable timber for present use—that is, if you locked up the bush.

60. Are you not referring to figured rimu?—Yes.

61. I am speaking of rimu generally?—I think we should have a small supply to keep for future use.

62. You think it would be desirable that we should conserve a supply of timber necessary to preserve the continuity of the furniture-making business?—I think it would be advisable to do that, as a manufacturer.

63. Now, how is it you have a difficulty in obtaining rimu here suitable for doormaking?—It seems to me that the Wanganui rimu is superior to the class supplied down here. It has a softer nature. Our rimu is much more liable to warp than that from the North.

64. How about the West Coast—there is plenty of rain there?—It is not the wetness of the climate that affects it here. It is our very cold and our very hot weather.

65. Has the want of proper seasoning anything to do with it?—I do not think so. The stuff that we use we cut in winter. We always keep the winter and the summer stuff separate. The winter stuff is more valuable, because it is not so liable to warp, and it is much easier to work.

66. For manufacturing purposes, then, it is desirable to have logs cut in winter instead of summer?—Yes.

67. With regard to the use of Oregon, do you not think that it would be better to use Oregon, say, for stringers, heavy beams, and pillars, in large buildings, such as warehouses, &c., than to use our rimu for that purpose, seeing that the rimu is more suitable for fine work?—Yes, that is so; but when we use rimu for large beams now it is the rough stuff that is cut for that purpose—the finer quality is used for internal fittings, and there is a larger proportion of rough timber to be got rid of.

68. Do you experience any difficulty in getting seasoned timber?—If you want it, you can get it. Nobody seasons it.

69. They charge 1s. a hundred extra for it?—That is not sufficient for seasoning timber.

70. They charge 2s. in Christchurch?—That would pay.

71. If a house was constructed of seasoned timber, would that add very much to its life?—Very much.

72. Would it add £100 to the life of a house?—That depends on the size of the house.

73. Say a six-roomed house?—No. It would not add £100. Given seasoned timber, if kept well painted, it would add at any rate about a quarter to the life of a house, or, say, 25 per cent.

74. Say that there were 10,000 ft. of timber in a house which cost 2s. per hundred feet additional for seasoning, which would make a difference of £10, would it not be a good thing for the general public if the timber in every house were seasoned?—The general public would be much better off than at present. You could not, however, compel a merchant to season timber and sell it at a loss.

75. Would it not be a good thing to get our architects to specify for seasoned timber?—Yes, the sooner the better.

76. Can you give us any information regarding beech and its uses?—I have not had much experience in beech. We use it for some parts of furniture. It has only lately been introduced here—within these last four or five years.

77. I hear that some of the most handsome suites are made of it?—It is very beautiful, and we use it for similar purposes. It is very tough, although to look at it one would think that he could break it with his finger.

78. A few years ago it was practically valueless?—We did not cut it.

79. Is that so down here?—There was no demand for it.

80. *Mr. Arnold.*] You spoke about the manufacture of doors. What class of timber do you say your doors are chiefly made of?—Inside doors are chiefly made of kauri.

81. Are they all locally made?—Mostly locally made, but some come from Dunedin.

82. Are our doors being imported from other places?—A few are being imported occasionally, but very few.

83. Where from?—Mostly from America and from the Baltic.

84. Do you know that some thousands are at the present time coming in from Sweden to New Zealand?—No; I was not aware of it.

85. Is there any danger of manufactured goods of that kind coming here in great quantities?—I am certain there is. The labour laws are different there, and the men are different. The men stick to one line, and get very expert in it. Here you have a man who is a blacksmith