

16. How many manufacturers of venetian-blinds are there?—Only two in Dunedin.

17. I am speaking of the Dominion?—I am only acquainted with the factories in the chief centres. The D.S.C. and others are taking it up and working it as part of the furniture trade in Auckland. In Wellington I know of two. In Christchurch all the furniture-manufacturers are doing it. There is White, Strange and Co., and others.

18. Is it necessary for your business to have the timber imported?—We tried the West Coast timber, but found it was not suitable.

19. *Mr. Field.*] With regard to the duty on timber, do you think it should be imposed on the large pieces of timber rather than on small pieces?—No, the small pieces rather than the large. I have given considerable thought to this subject, and I have gone into it with several members of Parliament at different times.

20. Do you know very much about our other New Zealand timbers?—I was managing a sawmill in Greymouth at one time years ago.

21. Would you admit foreign timber for building purposes free at the expense of our own timber industry?—Yes. I am satisfied that the amount of work that would be given in the building trade alone would more than compensate in the other direction.

22. Supposing you got New Zealand timbers at a reasonable rate, what would you do?—In that case the foreign timber would not be used.

23. Would you be in favour of foreign timbers, if they killed our own legitimate industry, and in that case would our timber not then have to be burned off?—If it was retarding building I should, certainly.

24. Only if it was retarding building?—That is all.

25. Do you know enough about the subject to say that the price of timber has had any material effect?—It has undoubtedly.

26. Has it a large effect?—Building in Dunedin has increased 25 to 50 per cent. during the last five years.

27. Do you think the general depression has had anything to do with it?—It may have had during the present year, but not before that. The building trade has been steady up to about a year ago.

28. What prices are they paying for building-timber?—Kauri is the only timber I use.

29. *Mr. Leyland.*] You agree, Mr. Scott, that timber should be imported to replace the shortage of kauri when it is suitable?—Yes.

30. Is the shortage of kauri relieved by the importation of Oregon pine?—Undoubtedly.

31. With reference to your orders for kauri, do you find any difficulty in getting your supplies from Auckland?—Yes, at a price. I import from Auckland now, and save about 5s. per hundred.

32. With reference to export duties on kauri, are you aware there is an export duty of 5s. on logs and 3s. on flitches, so that it keeps work in the country?—Yes, but at the same time if you took the duty off imported timber altogether you could land kauri cheaper here from Sydney than from Auckland.

33. That is a mistake. The Sydney people are willing to give 19s. on the wharf. How can it be cheaper, if you get it for 18s. 6d.?—We never get it at that price.

34. If you get 19s. per hundred from the Auckland people, and if you can import other timbers—say, Oregon—for the prices that are stated—say, 10s.—and it is just as good for certain purposes as kauri, do you not think, seeing that the Dominion would make 9s. profit on the transaction, that it would be good business?—It is a question of the limit of the life of the kauri forest.

35. More kauri is destroyed by fire than by the axe: do you not think, therefore, that my proposal would be a benefit to the colony?—A benefit to the part of the Dominion where the kauri grows.

36. *Mr. Clarke.*] With reference to the proposal to increase the duty on small sizes, seeing that we are absolutely obliged to use this timber, would not the only effect be to increase the cost here?—No, it would give more labour in the colony.

37. Would it not increase the cost to the general public?—Very little.

38. It would of necessity increase the cost to some extent?—No. I manufacture everything myself, and I am competing successfully against all others.

39. Is it not a fact that the prices would be regulated by the amount of duty, and if the duty went up there would be an excess and therefore an increased price?—The price has not varied for eight years now.

40. Have the conditions varied during the last eight years?—Very little.

41. Not so much as it would be if the increased duty was on it, I suppose?—I do not think the duty would make much difference. It is one of the hardest things to alter an established and fixed price.

42. In view of the fact that it has been proved that prices have gone up 8, 10, and 20 per cent., would such increases not affect the price?—It would modify my opinion in respect to house-building, but where you have a regular fixed price for a certain manufactured article, say, so much a foot, it is very hard to alter it.

43. If I told you that I have myself paid 10d. a foot for venetian-blinds at one time, and within a reasonable time thereafter I bought at 6½d., would not that show elasticity in prices even in connection with venetian-blinds?—No, it would not, because some firms can turn out blinds for 6½d., and it is a dearer blind than one at 10d. It is merely a question of painting. If they are painted by machinery then you can get them for 6½d.

44. If you assume that I am a practical man myself and know what I am doing when I buy a blind, you would not conclude that I would go to the dearest place, but that on the contrary I would look out for the cheapest rate. Would the duty in such a case increase the price?—No, I do not think so.