

34. Do you find it very difficult to get large timber?—Yes.

35. Long lengths?—Yes, we always have trouble in getting long lengths even now when the mills are not busy—they do not seem to be able to get them.

36. Therefore you use Oregon pine?—Yes.

37. And do you think Oregon especially should come in free whether the other timbers do or not?—I think Oregon and all hardwoods should. We have no hardwood in New Zealand.

38. Of course, as a builder and, I presume, at one time a working-man on wages, you believe in encouraging local industries?—Yes, as much as possible—as long as you have not to pay too much for it.

39. Do you know the extent of the sawmilling industry in the Dominion?—No, I could not give you the figures.

40. You know that there are some thousands of men employed in the industry?—Yes; but in my opinion if the Oregon and hardwoods did come in free it would not interfere with the milling to any extent. The red-pine at present is suitable for flooring and lining and doors of dressed timber, and it would always be used for that. Oregon pine would never replace it for that.

41. You think the industry would still go on?—Yes, I do not think it would hurt the industry at all.

42. Now, you heard a question this morning with regard to the increase in the cost of a workman's cottage. Is the advance in the cost owing to the price of the timber or in consequence of the superior buildings that are being erected now—the extra fittings that are put into the buildings now in comparison with those a few years ago?—There is really so little timber in a four-roomed cottage that it does not make a great deal of difference. The cottages are now finished so much better than they were twenty years ago. Most people now want a bath and hot water and drainage, and all that adds to the cost of the building.

43. More fancy work inside and outside?—Yes.

44. If anything from a four- to a seven-roomed house were erected now on the same style as fifteen years ago, would there be a very great difference?—On a building that took, say, 15,000 ft. of timber I suppose you could estimate a rise of 3s. a hundred feet, and on a four-roomed cottage that would be £21 10s. The joinery has increased a good deal on account of the kauri. Kauri doors have increased during the last six years by 5s. or 6s. a door.

45. We have in New Zealand very large areas of bush country, which is a very valuable asset to the Dominion. If it could be shown to this Commission that the bringing-in of timber free will cripple the industry and that this valuable asset is being destroyed by fire, would you still ask that hard timbers of all kinds be permitted to come in free?—Well, we cannot get the large timber at anything like a reasonable cost. When you want over 30 ft. in length in red-pine it is very difficult to obtain it.

46. Of course, you buy locally?—From Southland.

47. When bringing timber from Southland, to what railway-station would you bring it?—Dunedin Station.

48. Not Pelichet Bay?—No, Dunedin.

49. Do you know that it costs considerably less for freight on the railway to bring it to Pelichet Bay than to Dunedin?—Well, the cartage would make the difference. Of course, it depends upon where you are going to take the timber to. If you are down at the north end it would be all right.

50. Do you not think it a peculiar thing that the Railway Department should charge less to Pelichet Bay from Southland than to Dunedin?—They may have more room at the siding. It may be more handy for them to get the timber there than at the yard here.

51. *Mr. Hanan.*] Can you say if any builders have gone to the wall in Dunedin during the last seven years?—There have been several, but I could not say the reason for it.

52. Have the number of builders increased in Dunedin during the last five years?—Yes, considerably.

53. What do you attribute that to?—There has been more work going on than previously.

54. Has there been a building boom in Dunedin?—No, there has never been what you might call a boom, but there has always been plenty of work.

55. Do you know if any timber-merchants have closed up business during the last three or four years?—No, I cannot think of any that have closed up.

56. Have they increased in Dunedin during the last five years?—No, I think they have just remained about the same.

57. Do you import much timber?—No, I have never imported any.

58. Do you use much kauri?—Well, we use it principally for window-frames, stairs, counters, and that sort of thing.

59. Did you hear the evidence given by the last witness in regard to imposing a duty on it?—Yes.

60. Do you agree with him in that?—Well, we ought to conserve it as much as possible, because it is the only timber we have got that is suitable for stairs, counters, or anything of that sort. For beams Oregon is quite as good, if not better, and much cheaper.

61. Do you think, by allowing the Oregon to come in free, it will tend to increase the building trade?—Well, it will certainly make it cheaper in big buildings, but it will not affect the trade in any way.

62. Do you use much Oregon in Dunedin?—This last few years a good quantity has been used.

63. Do you consider it is better than rimu?—For special purposes.

64. For what purposes?—For tie-beams, roofs, and heavy joists.

65. *Mr. Field.*] Do you consider the prices for ordinary timber charged here by the timber-merchants too high?—If it was paying the millers three years ago there has been nothing that I know of since to cause any increase unless it is that they have to go further back into the bush.