

99. And thickness?—One inch thick.

100. Joists are generally 2 in.?—Yes.; 10 in. wide is dearer than 8 in. wide—8 in. is the minimum.

101. Do you think the price charged here for Oregon—15s. and upwards—is a fair price?—I suppose they would not sell it at that if it did not pay them.

102. Do you know anything about the port charges in Dunedin?—No.

103. You spoke about the carting of timber, but do you not think it would be cheaper to cart the timber to the yards than to pay the demurrage charges on the wharf?—There are yards right alongside the wharf.

104. But still it has to be handled?—Yes.

105. *Mr. Clarke.*] With reference to the resolution that was handed in to the Commission, I suppose we are to understand that that, of course, represents not only your own opinion but the opinions of the Builders' Association generally?—Yes.

106. It is not the opinion of the individual?—No.

107. With regard to the price of timber, you quoted 13s. 6d. per hundred, and that is the very lowest basis. I have here a Dunedin price-list, the first three items being 8 in. by 1 in. 13s. 6d., 10 in. by 1 in. 14s. 6d., and 12 in. by 1 in. 15s. 6d. Now, is it not a fact that a large amount of the building-timber that is used is of the wider sizes and not the 8 in. by 1 in.?—Yes, a large amount of it.

108. And it is also a fact that the standard idea of measuring timber is by the superficial foot—say, 12 by 1?—Yes.

109. And therefore it is only fair to take 12 by 1 as the average standard measurement in timber. You are charged at that rate, are you not?—Yes.

110. Now, 12 by 1, instead of being 13s. 6d., according to the price-list, is 15s. 6d., so in reality the average price is 14s. 6d., and not 13s. 6d.?—Yes.

111. Is there not a large amount of timber used over 20 ft. in length?—Yes, in every building, apart from sizes.

112. In the matter of tonguing and grooving there is considerably additional. You use large amounts?—Yes.

113. So that it would be a fair thing to assume that the average price for timber is much over 13s. 6d.?—Yes, I would say that it would average considerably more than that. That is the lowest.

114. Touching the difficulties in obtaining supplies, it is the custom in the building trade to limit the time in which the contract shall be done?—Yes.

115. Does that not sometimes put you in difficulties?—Yes, when the trade is busy here it is hard on us.

116. Assuming you want 200 lengths of 12 by 2, could you get them in Dunedin?—No, I do not think so.

117. With regard to the extent of building operations, have you any idea of the value of buildings that have been put up during the last twelve months in this city?—For the last year, ending about Christmas time, it was about £96,000.

118. *Mr. Morris.*] *Mr. Clarke* has just spoken respecting timber in buildings. For instance, the price of dressed timber would be increased. Would that increase not apply to imported timber if you had it dressed here?—There would be very little dressed timber used in imported timber.

119. Thirteen shillings and sixpence does not represent the average price?—It depends on the class of building. In a cottage it would be a fair average. On a big building it would average more than 8 by 1.

120. I am talking of the average cost of a cottage?—In a cottage there would be very little over 8 by 1.

121. Not 10 per cent.?—Oh, no!

122. I thought that. Is there any great demand in Dunedin at present for cottage property?—I do not think there are many empty houses.

123. Is there any demand for houses in the building trade?—Not so much as there was twelve months ago.

124. That means that the demand has fallen off?—It is a little bit quiet just at present, but it is not bad.

125. You find rimu and our native timbers unsuitable for joists and studdings and the general framing of a building, and I think you said that rimu was very suitable for flooring and lining. You thought Oregon superior for framework?—It is lighter and more easily handled, and when you get into bigger sizes it is cheaper.

126. For general house-work do you consider it necessary to import Oregon at all?—For framing in a plastered houses it is preferable to red-pine.

127. Is it stronger?—It does not twist so much.

128. Is it a good class of red-pine that you get here?—Yes, fair. The dressed timber is very good. They seem to use the best timber for dressing.

129. *Mr. Barber.*] You said there was a timber association?—Yes.

130. Of what is the association composed? Is it a combination of merchants or sawmillers?—I could not say. I know there is an association. I do not know what they call it.

131. Are all the timber-merchants in the association?—As far as I know.

132. Do you know how long the association has been in existence?—For seven or eight years.

133. It has been stated that timber has gone up during recent years from 8s. to 14s.?—Something about that. I was speaking of the last six years. It has gone up in that time about 3s.