

12. You would have a Government official to report on areas suitable to be cut in winter?—On areas at present not in use, so that you do not touch the industry as at present, and gradually it would grow up under these conditions. There is provision of this kind in all the European countries and in the Old Country. I know that, in my experience there, now and then an oak-tree had to be felled. Permission was granted by the proper authorities; then the tree was cut down and split up into firewood.

13. You are an architect by profession?—I am president of the local body and a member of the Council of the Institute of New Zealand.

14. If your society were to agree that all specifications should provide for only seasoned wood would not the difficulty be met in that way?—No, because you cannot get it. We put it into our specifications—the interpretation is dry timber—and we put it in that the timber must be delivered within a certain date after the signing of the contract, but we rarely get that carried out. We cannot get local timber quick enough, and where time clauses come into play that is the first point that is made—that the timber cannot be got. We specify that it is to be on the job by a certain time, but we cannot get it. There are many reasons why it is extremely difficult to enforce the penalty clause. It has never been successfully done yet. It is a good clause, but hard to enforce.

15. Has the difficulty in getting seasoned timber anything to do with the increase of the import?—No doubt of it.

16. You know that the importation of foreign timber is increasing?—Yes.

17. Do you think it is necessary?—As far as has come to my knowledge, you could not have done without it. Buildings I have had could not have gone on without the Oregon beam, and the ceilings and so forth could not have been put up. We have tried the red-pine battens, and it is not successful for metal or fibrous plaster. You frequently see a cheap building with the mark of the lath showing through the plaster.

18. So that if these timbers were not imported the building industry would be crippled?—It would be delayed, and there would not be the value in the building owing to the timber not being in a proper condition.

19. If the duty on imported timber were increased, do you think it would have a detrimental effect?—Unless it were increased to a prohibitive degree we should still specify it for good-quality work, and the difference would be on the consumer.

20. Whom do you mean by the "consumer"?—The proprietors of the buildings. They would have to pay more, and if they are building for speculative purposes the people taking their buildings would have to pay high rents.

21. So that it is passed on to the general public?—Yes, and it is felt most by the portion of the general public who can bear it least.

22. From your large experience, you think there should not be an increased duty on imported timber?—It affects the whole population to such an extent, and if there is any injury done it is to a small class. If there was free trade in timber it would be better. It would improve our buildings. They would be more durable, cheaper, and there would be less trouble in future in connection with them.

23. Would you not recommend a duty on smaller sizes so as to encourage labour in this Dominion?—If you have to have a duty at all you could put it more safely on small than on large sizes. For instance, in framing; it is not so much in joisting, but in finishing, planking, &c., and the joinery-work, so that if you put a duty on small scantlings required for these things you would not be doing an injury to the building trade, and the larger beams would not be touched. They do not take away from the output of the local bush mills so much as the small scantlings. If you are to have any duty at all put it on the smaller scantlings.

24. Except that there is always a tendency to cut up scantlings?—Well, the labour in the country is employed on that, and it is good to encourage that.

25. With regard to manufactured goods—doors and sashes—is there much of them being imported?—I think there is a tendency to increase the importation of manufactured goods. It is very difficult to get local doors good.

26. Have you had these doors put into buildings?—I have trouble at this moment with red-pine doors, without mouldings, showing daylight through them in some places; in fact, it would pay to use American doors.

27. Have you seen doors from Sweden?—Yes, they are very soft wood.

28. Are they to be compared with rimu?—Not for appearance, but for standing they are better.

29. We have had evidence that they are inferior?—They are inferior in this respect, that they are very soft; they are rather too thin in the panels, but that is done for purposes of freight, of course. If you import a door you have got to take it as it stands.

30. You think that trade is likely to increase?—It is increasing.

31. You think it is desirable that it should increase?—I do not think so. I think if we imported the proper material and the joinery was done here it would be better, because we should have complete control over it ourselves, and we have machinery and men here capable of producing as good, if not better, articles as in the world.

32. If rimu is seasoned it is quite good enough for ordinary purposes?—I have seen excellent doors from it in Wellington, Christchurch, and the northern cities.

33. You think, having the machinery and the labour, we should do all we can to encourage our own industries?—Yes, but you do not want to put a shilling in one of our pockets and take 1s. 6d. out of the other. You must not increase the cost of the house. The most important thing is durability.

34. Can you tell me the increase of cost of an ordinary five- or six-roomed house within the last ten years, as a building or per room?—I should say—take a four-roomed cottage—we used to