

86. That is a good reason for cutting it down?—Yes, if the land is sufficiently good.

87. Is it not a disaster that that timber is wasted?—Yes, no doubt.

88. You said you could not see any disaster?—Not to the country.

89. Is not that a disaster to the country?—No. In order to prevent that timber being wasted you create a greater disaster. You would make every man requiring timber pay higher for his building. If you legislated in such a way as to make that timber of such value as to put a man in to cut it up to keep out the foreign timbers, you would be taxing the whole country for that bit of timber.

90. That is not so. Assuming that the man who owned that timber was prepared to mill it at a reasonable price—probably under the price that people would have to pay for Oregon pine—nevertheless he cannot use it because Oregon pine is shutting him out?—If he could mill it and sell it at a price cheaper than Oregon pine it would go into the market.

91. The experience at the present time is that up North the architects are specifying Oregon pine for buildings for which we believe our timber is more suitable?—There is this to be said so far as the building in the Dominion is concerned: that two-thirds of it is put up in the colony and never has an architect near it. It is done by the enterprising builder, and if he could get timber cheaper than Oregon pine he would put it in. If you were to put red paint on all the houses round Dunedin that have had an architect's hands about them, you would see very little paint about Dunedin.

92. Supposing I am prepared to mill and deliver it on the works in Wellington—first-class ordinary building-rimu—for 10s., is that too much?—No.

93. We cannot sell it because Oregon is shutting it out. It has been selling there at 11s., which is an unduly low price. You see the difficulty?—The difficulty really at the back of it is that there is a slump in the building trade in Wellington—that is the real trouble. It has nothing to do with the Oregon pine. If you can sell good rimu for 10s. out of your bush you are all right.

94. But you cannot sell it?—You have only to wait.

95. Now, come to the question of the destruction of the 500 acres of timber I have mentioned. The timber is destroyed and a farm takes its place. What next happens? It is not good for the country. Is not the railway freight lost to the country?—It would be, but there is the freight on the farm-produce.

96. The same thing would happen if you milled your timber—you lose that freight absolutely. You still have the produce to sell after you have lost the freight of the timber?—Yes.

97. Then, if you have been unfortunate enough to put in a mill with trams costing, say, £5,000, that is a loss?—Yes.

98. Well, then, what about your labour which you lose?—Suppose a mill employs twenty-five or thirty or more hands—these men lose their employment?—Yes.

99. Take another aspect of it—the fact that the money for the timber, apart from the labour, goes out of the country?—That happens in all trades.

100. Summing it all up, would it not be a fair thing if we could adjust it so that we could buy as cheaply as possible, import without a duty or with very little duty, such timber as we really need in this country that does not cut into our own timber, and we should put a duty—not an absolutely prohibitive duty, but a good round sum—on timber that competes with our own? If we sell such timbers as matai and rimu at a reasonable price in this country, would it not be a fair thing to protect that industry? Would it not be a fair thing to put a duty on such timber as that from outside, and take the duty off altogether, or reduce it, on the class of timber we absolutely need, such as large pieces?—I will answer you from my own personal opinion only. I think anybody who talks about protecting or taxing the importation of raw material to a country which depends on its work is making a mistake. The more raw material you can bring in for the workers to work up the better.

101. If my proposition is right, there would be just as much labour in the country, because I am working on the basis that we are selling our timber at a reasonable price. Now, on that basis your argument as to the loss of labour falls to the ground?—No, because why do you want protection if you are selling at this price?

102. Then, with regard to the question of cutting trees in the summer-time, is it not true that your argument cannot have nearly so much weight in the case of trees that are not deciduous as in the case of trees that are deciduous?—Certainly it is not nearly so marked—there is always sap in our timber, but the great flow of sap takes place in the summer-time.

103. Is it not in the deciduous timbers that the swelling-out of the buds takes place in the summer-time?—Yes. There is more sap in the summer, and there is a greater loss of sap in the winter-time, and sap of a different nature.

104. Do you think it would be a fair thing to restrict it?—Yes, if you could restrict it without hampering the industry.

105. Then, in regard to cutting down the timber forests, you said something about droughts resulting. Are you not aware that that is a very debatable question?—I have heard it debated, but I am not going on my own experience. This City of Dunedin used to be as wet as any place you could get on the face of the earth when the forests were existing, and, although we have had this wet weather lately, we have not had $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. in six hours. Water that used to run down rivers has now ceased to flow.

106. Can you tell this Commission authoritatively whether there are laws prevailing in other countries against cutting timber in the summer-time?—Yes. It has been so in the Old Country, but whether a local law or a general law I do not know. In Germany it is the case—you are not allowed to cut timber. By "timber" they do not mean trees. If you cut trees you do so under regulations, but you are not allowed to send it to the market as timber; you are not allowed to impose on the public a bad tree. You may cut it up for firewood, or what they call log-timber.