

27. Was that passed unanimously?—Yes.
28. Do you think that the two-thirds of the builders outside the association would agree with that resolution?—I cannot answer for them; I do not think they have got time to think.
29. If it is in the interest of the trade they should be favourable to it; if not they would not be?—You are going by numbers, but I look upon my association as quality.
30. Give us capital if you wish?—Capital and quality. There are builders and builders. The most of those outside are workmen who take small cottage contracts, who do not employ many hands, who have no stock, and a man running a large business cannot compete against them.
31. Would you say that two-thirds of the building is done by your association, or what proportion to the capital amount of work?—That would be rather a bold statement to make, but I think it was mentioned here yesterday that during the last nine months about 96,000 pounds' worth of work went through the association.
32. Would that represent half the work?—I believe it would.
33. The building trade is slacker now than in the past. Are there many out of work?—I have not been to the Labour Bureau to see. A few contractors are slack just now.
34. It has been represented that the trade is not so slack here as in other parts of the Dominion?—I have heard so.
35. Do you know anything about the timber that comes from the Catlin's district?—I cannot say that I do. I have seen some lying about in a promiscuous sort of manner in a yard at Milton, but that is all I know about it.
36. The evidence we have had is rather contradictory. Some say it is inferior to Southland timber, and the last witness said that from around Rakanui it is not superior?—I could not say.
37. *Mr. Field.*] Your association does not band together to keep down wages or keep up the prices of timber?—No.
38. Is the association satisfied with the present price?—There have been some complaints made about the price of timber, especially in the dressed lines.
39. Not in the ordinary building lines?—No, except that quality is not so good as formerly. I have not heard many complaints in regard to the price of the ordinary building-timber.
40. *Mr. Clarke.*] With reference to the extent of the opinion of builders outside the association, is it not fair to assume that if the builders who are not members of the association had the contrary opinion they would have taken some means of expressing it? You have not heard that?—No.
41. With regard to the use of Oregon, is it the custom where plaster-work is done to specify Oregon pine? Is it the general practice to use it, in preference to red-pine?—As far as I know it has not been done yet.
42. With regard to the proposal to increase the duty on Oregon pine, we know what the opinions of the association are, and we know that the yearly consumption of timber is increasing all the time?—Yes.
43. Do you not think that the annual increase in consumption will account for the amount of Oregon that is likely to be brought in, supposing the millers do not increase their mills and their plants, and will not dislocate their trade?—Certainly.
44. *Mr. Barber.*] The witness said he believed the tightness in the timber trade was due largely to the high price of land. What is the price?—It all depends on the locality. In High Street, Roslyn, a half-acre was sold a year ago for £1,360; that is within eight minutes' ride of this hall. Quarter-acre sections in High Street, Roslyn, are valued at £400. Sections of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre are valued at £130. Land almost anywhere is very dear, and you cannot do speculative building on it.
45. What is the price in St. Kilda?—Half the price of Roslyn.

DUNEDIN, SATURDAY, 3RD APRIL, 1909.

DAVID BARRON sworn and examined. (No. 33.)

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What are you?—Commissioner of Crown Lands for Otago.
2. We wish to obtain from you information as to the number of sawmilling leases under your jurisdiction in this province, the names of the lessees, the terms, and the time they have to finish; also the amount of bush available for leasing in the future, and the estimated quantity and quality of the bush?—Statements in reply to one or two of the items you have mentioned will require to be completed. We have the number of sawmillers, but I do not know about their names.
3. It has been stated that people obtained leases and held them for three years without complying with the conditions in any way; that they were then put up to auction again at the end of three years, and the money paid over to the man that had the offer, instead of going into the revenue of the colony?—I might say that this district is somewhat different from Southland, in this respect, that considerable areas of unsurveyed Crown land have been taken up and turned into sawmilling areas. So far as Otago is concerned, there are only a certain number of sections taken up, and it is a matter of a man taking up one, two, and three sections for his area.
4. Taking the land and timber, or only the timber?—I must explain in connection with that by-and-by. As to the position of the bush in the Catlin's district, these returns I have will, I think, supply all the information you have just referred to. I find I have the names of the sawmillers, the various areas, and the amounts paid for them. I have not the dates, but they can be supplied.