

19. So that in time there will be very little difference between local and imported timber in the matter of seasoning?—Both will have to be seasoned after arrival. All we use of Oregon here is such an absolute drop in the bucket that our taking a little more or less will not affect the position.

20. *Mr. Hanan.*] What amount of timber has this boat brought to Dunedin?—Five hundred and sixty thousand feet.

21. Can you tell us when the last shipment arrived here?—Yes. About three or four weeks ago 200,000 ft. arrived. The only shipment prior to that was some 350,000 ft., which arrived about four months ago. These are practically all the shipments of Oregon to Dunedin worth speaking about.

22. Does it come by rail here?—No.

23. What is Oregon sold at?—We sell Oregon at £1 1s., less 10 per cent. and 2½ per cent., which is practically 18s. 6d.

24. Do you know what you paid in freight?—That is not our concern. We buy at a price c.i.f.—that is, free on board and the freight; the freight may be to us an unknown quantity. We deal with a merchant who makes his own freight arrangements. The freight, however, is about 3s., I should say. It may be 3s. 6d. in this present instance, but the freight is not a thing that worries us, because, as you have seen, we buy on a c.i.f. basis.

25. Who is the vessel owned by?—I do not know. The captain is a Norwegian, and I have made no inquiries into the *personnel* of the crew. In the last vessel they were all Norwegians, and they were a fine type of men; in fact, if compared with some of our crews, the comparison was entirely in their favour. You should have seen the way they worked.

26. What did you pay before for your shipment of Oregon?—Am I obliged to state that here?

27. *The Acting-Chairman.*] You can give it to us privately?—Certainly, but I do not care to put a thing like that in the papers.

28. Do you get much timber from the North?—Yes, kauri.

29. What do you pay for it?—Nineteen shillings lately.

30. What is your selling-price?—Thirty-two shillings less 10 per cent. and 2½ per cent.

31. Do you know the prices paid for it in Auckland?—Yes, 19s., which is the f.o.b. price.

32. Do you know why there should be such a difference in the price?—There is freight, 3s.; wharfage, 6d.; labour on wharf and measuring, costing from 2d. to 3d.; cartage, 4d.; receiving or yard charges, which include delivery and stacking, which may be put at 1s. Then there is deterioration, remeasuring and resawing, and waste. Kauri is apt to split, and in this respect alone you are liable to drop 10 to 15 per cent. of the original quantity. There is, further, a certain amount of waste in remeasuring that is equal to 1s. On the whole, therefore, we get about 1s. 6d., roughly. We have to pay our office staff, our canvassers, and travellers. Further, I may mention there is interest on capital, not to mention high fire insurance and insurance on our men. Our profit is, roughly speaking, from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. That is not a big profit. As a matter of fact, kauri is a bad line for us. I saw a statement in the papers the other day that we had a big profit, but that is not so.

33. Have you difficulty in getting kauri?—Yes. Orders will stand for months and months, and we cannot get it. Owing to the difficulty in getting kauri supplies in anything like reasonable time, we are in a large measure compelled to look round for Oregon to take its place. Auckland tells us that they have got as much business with England and Australia as they want, and they will not bother with us.

34. Do you favour an export duty being placed on kauri?—Well, I think it might be wise. It is a matter of policy that does not affect us here materially. If the kauri-supplies are to be exhausted in twenty years, it is a great pity they should go out of the country.

35. Do you think the increased importation of Oregon will destroy our sawmilling industry?—No. Certainly it would have some effect on it, but not much so far as Otago and Southland are concerned. On the other hand, in the North they are getting it in larger quantities, and it will react on us.

36. It is not sufficient to justify an increased duty being put on?—What I suggested before was that the duty might be increased on the smaller sizes. I think that would be a good idea. By big sizes I refer to those above 30 in. to 36 in.—that is, on the square—a 12 by 3 is 36 in. Sizes below that I think might bear a somewhat heavier duty, and thus retain the sawing and work in the country. The duty then should be slightly reduced in the large sizes.

37. Have you considered the effect the importation of Oregon will have on our railway freights and upon the revenue of the Dominion?—I do not think it would have a very serious effect in those respects. There is one point which I think is an absolute anomaly: I refer to the charge of a rate and a half by the railways on Oregon, which is simply putting money into the coffers of the railway. The other day a coal-mine required certain stuff for its work, and they ordered in kauri, but when I gave them the price they were staggered, and they took it in Oregon at a price of one-third less than kauri. They had, however, to pay a rate and a half on the railway as freight on the Oregon, but that did nothing to protect the timber industry of New Zealand. Such a rate only makes our local industries pay more heavily for their requirements than they should.

38. Do you sell much timber for coal-mining purposes; and, if so, is it increasing?—Yes, a fair amount. It is steady.

39. What class?—A good deal of local timber, and occasionally Oregon.

40. For dairy purposes?—Nearly all local timber, except for odds and ends.

41. *Mr. Jennings.*] Do you stack timber for any length of time? Do you charge more for seasoned timber?—Yes, we do, but we cannot get an extra price for it, except in a few instances.

42. You say that people were not paying the price for seasoned timber?—Yes, jobs here are generally taken on a contract basis; the contractor comes here and wants it on a cheap basis. So he gets it direct from the mill usually. It is the architect's business to see that the timber is seasoned. The builder is trying to get it to the best advantage.