

15. Do you know whether those trees will be suitable for sleepers?—I should think so.

16. Do you think it would be a wise thing for the Government to see that a large number of trees suitable for railway use is planted in the Dominion?—I think so.

17. Is there anything else you would like to add?—I do not think there is anything further. I said that we were using hardwoods in large numbers now—mostly jarrah. The price at which we get the jarrah renders it economical that we should do so. Of course, you pay more for them than for the softwoods, but they have a very much longer life.

18. *Mr. Hanan.*] Can you give us any information as to the timber used in the workshops here—for car-building?—Not any detailed information. I have not much to do with the workshops—they do not come under my jurisdiction. They use kauri pretty largely, and Australian woods.

19. Do you care to express an opinion as to the need of conserving our forests?—Well, I do not know that I should, unless it be taken as the opinion of a layman. Personally, I should like to see them conserved.

20. Do you think that the importation of foreign timbers tends to conserve our local timber-supply?—I think it undoubtedly must.

21. *Mr. Field.*] Do I understand you to say that, speaking from a railway point of view, you thought it better to use Australian sleepers than our own?—Yes, speaking from a railway point of view.

22. You think your estimates of the lives of creosoted and uncreosoted sleepers are fair?—I think they are very close.

23. You have had a good many years' experience?—Yes.

24. The reason I asked the question was because it was mentioned by Mr. McCredie in Invercargill that it would last longer?—Did he differentiate between the straight line and the curved track?

25. Perhaps his was on the straight?—I said that in the straight tracks it would last up to eighteen years, I thought.

26. He said twenty years?—Yes, that is on the straight, but not for the curves such as I have charge of.

27. Have you seen the creosoting process at work?—No, I have not actually seen it at work.

28. You are not prepared to say whether the creosote-works are up to date or satisfactory?—I am not prepared to say that, but I understand they are up to date.

29. *Mr. Leyland.*] Have you any experience as to the life of a puriri sleeper?—Not a great deal of personal experience.

30. How long would you say was the life of a puriri sleeper?—I have seen a good many taken out of the track, and from inquiries that I have made—I am not depending on my own observation, but on the observations of others—I find that the consensus of opinion is that they are good for twenty years.

31. Mr. McCredie told us that the expense of creosoting was largely dependent upon the quantity of creosote used—that is, with an ordinary 8 by 5 sleeper?—Yes.

32. There is on the table here a pamphlet and specimens of birch creosoted and uncreosoted by the new American process called the Rueping process, which extracts the creosote. Have you had an opportunity of giving any attention to that particular system?—No, I have not.

33. *Mr. Morris.*] In reply to a question put to you just now you said you were in favour of conserving our forests—what would be the effect on our railways?—Well, I do not quite know.

34. Does not a large percentage of our railway earnings accrue from the carriage of timber?—Yes, certainly. I did not mean by conserving our forests the shutting-up of every mill, or not using any native timbers at all. I thought the question rather referred to the waste that had gone on through the progress of settlement burning up the timber.

35. I thought you wanted to look up the whole thing?—I did not have that in my mind.

36. *Mr. Barber.*] Is the timber traffic on railways very profitable?—I cannot say.

37. Have you used for sleepers any trees that have been planted in New Zealand but not natural to New Zealand, such as the blue-gum, for instance?—No, I have not myself, and I do not think any have been used.

38. Are there any trees growing in New Zealand, not natural to New Zealand, that would be suitable for railway sleepers?—I think some trees in Canterbury would be suitable for sleepers, provided they grew big enough.

39. Do you think it would be in the interest of the Dominion to encourage the planting of these trees for sleepers?—I think so.

40. *Mr. Ell.*] You say that on the average for replacing sleepers in the Otago District about 44,000 a year are required?—Forty-one thousand was the average for the last three years—viz., 35,000, 40,000, 48,000, averaging 41,000.

41. Have the Railway Department, to your knowledge, discussed the question as to the future supply of sleepers for the railway system of New Zealand, which is growing very rapidly?—I do not think that has been very seriously discussed.

42. Do you think that, in view of the fact that there are big demands made in Australia upon their hardwood, and the unsuitability of our timbers here, which are unsuitable in respect to the curves, it would be a wise thing on the part of the Department to take the matter into consideration?—That would depend upon what the supply is over in Australia. I understand the supply is unlimited, for the present at any rate. That will be a question for the future, no doubt.

43. Seeing that we have a big railway system, and that our requirements will be very great in the future, do you think it desirable that the Railway Department should consider it and make provision by planting special and suitable timbers for this work?—I should think so.