

and we set the example. We purchased a bush section in Catlin's about twenty years ago, and we have not allowed a stick of it to be cut, because of the value we attach to it. We are holding it there in reserve.

48. I would like to ask you as a citizen, and one who has devoted a good deal of attention to this subject, would it not be a good thing to establish a school of forestry?—One of the most necessary things to do.

49. Can you say what is being done by the Forestry Department at present?—Not very much. They have showed some diligence during the past few years in planting areas down South here. I think that, in the face of the wanton destruction of so much native bush, and the wholesale way that it is going on in the Catlin's and other districts which I have seen, it seems almost anomalous to be spending so much money in planting timber.

50. Do you refer to destruction of timber in rough and broken country?—Yes, I have seen many places where the bush was being wantonly destroyed, and where the land could be of no earthly use for any other purpose, such as on very steep faces on hillsides.

51. *Mr. Field.*] I got a letter this morning from a gentleman at Riverton who complains of the loss they are put to in consequence of the duty now levied on beech in Australia. Do you think they are suffering from a substantial grievance in that respect?—I think that the Commonwealth Government are standing in their own light by putting on a duty for the purpose of preventing the importation of timber like our beech here. The Commonwealth imports very extensively from the United States, and I am perfectly satisfied that our beech will stand a strain equal to and possesses a texture as good as any of those timbers.

52. *Mr. Ell.*] I think you stated in your evidence that you had an order outstanding for some time on the West Coast, and that you were unable to get it executed?—No; I have not an order standing at the present time. I do not think there is the same difficulty experienced in getting an order filled on the West Coast now that there was nine or twelve months ago. My remark did not apply to the present time.

53. *Mr. Morris.*] You obtain your supplies from the West Coast—practically from Mr. Malfoy?—Yes, he cut considerable quantities for the Exhibition. I know that a great deal of rimu has also been exported from New Zealand to the Commonwealth. There was an extreme difficulty in getting orders filled from nine to twelve months ago.

54. Are they large exporters to the Commonwealth?—Yes.

55. You say there was no rimu being exported to the Commonwealth until the last twelve months?—No rimu has been exported to the Commonwealth for years.

CHRISTCHURCH, TUESDAY, 6TH APRIL, 1909.

SAMUEL HURST SEAGER sworn and examined. (No. 38.)

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What are you?—An architect and Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

2. You are aware of the objects of this Commission, and we should like some information from you concerning the various paragraphs in the order of reference?—I do not know that I can give any information on those points, because I am an architect and do not know anything with regard to the cost of felling or the distribution of the timber, but as an architect I should like to bring some points before the Commission. My first note is on the relative value of Baltic and yellow deal as compared with New Zealand timbers for joinery. The New Zealand timbers suitable for joinery are kauri and rimu. The reason that imported timber is more often used is on account of the unreliable character of the New Zealand timbers. The different classes of timber are not sorted, so that it is impossible to tell what class of timber is being used. There is no better timber, I consider, for joinery than one variety of kauri, but this is mixed together with other varieties which are wholly unsuitable, so that no dependance can be placed upon it by architects. We have, therefore, to fall back upon the imported timbers, which are very carefully graded sometimes in Europe into as many as nine classes, the majority into four and five classes, all having distinct brands. In this way uniformity in any particular line is secured. The same remarks apply to rimu; plain, straight-grained wood is mixed with wood of irregular fibre, which, eminently suitable for decorative purposes, is quite unfit for any position of strength or for any position where freedom from casting and warping is essential. Kauri—the disrepute into which it falls from want of proper classification: Although there are four varieties of kauri timber, which could be easily classified, the timber is spoken of as a whole, in spite of the fact that these different varieties have very distinct and opposite qualities—for instance, one variety which has been distinguished as red kauri is very liable to cast, and twist, and shrink longitudinally as well as transversely. Another variety, which has been called the white kauri, does not warp, and does not shrink longitudinally if fairly seasoned. Another variety, called soft kauri, has the same qualities as the white kauri. Again, in respect to its weight-bearing qualities, the red kauri is very strong, and therefore suitable for beams and joists, as also is the white kauri, but the soft kauri will bear very much less transverse strain, and is wholly unsuitable for beams or heavy framing. In respect to durability, there is a variety called the black kauri, which, though unsuitable, on account of its being charged with resin, for joiners' work, is, on the contrary, the most durable of them all. Unless, therefore, these different varieties are distinguished by proper markings and sold separately, it is impossible to rely upon them for any particular purpose. These different varieties, it should be stated, can be found in one tree, the red being obtained from the central