

80. Have you heard anything from the North as to the statement that Oregon is competing largely with our rimu?—Not from the North, but I know it is here. It is getting a very ready sale. I went to the yards only yesterday, and saw a large stack had been removed within the last few days, all of Oregon timber.

81. For what purpose is it used?—For ordinary building purposes. It is taking the place of rimu in every respect, as far as I know.

82. For framing and flooring and outside work?—Not for flooring—it is not suitable for that—but for other purposes. The difference between the soft wood and the harder growth is too great, and so it would make an uneven floor. Baltic is not suitable for flooring for the same reason; it is apt to splinter. Oregon is used principally for framing, not for weatherboards. I have not seen it used for linings generally, but I have used it myself and have seen it used for decorative panels, for which it is very suitable.

83. It is used very largely for the purposes for which our rough sawn rimu is used?—Yes, it takes the place of that largely.

84. There is plenty of sale for figured rimu?—We cannot get enough of it. I have had great difficulty in getting it, and have had to pay £1 2s. for it sometimes.

85. It is readily understandable that where mills can sell the whole of their best rimu, they may have some difficulty in selling the rougher stuff if Oregon is replacing it?—Yes, that is most likely, but there would be no difficulty in getting rid of good rimu as long as it was available. I should always use it myself.

86. You are aware that a large amount of rimu is being discarded at the mills—near the bark—timber that would be fit for sheds, &c.?—Some of it is, but there is not enough thrown away. Too much sap-wood comes down.

87. Although the sap-timber could be cut into boards, you think it should be thrown away?—I think it is a waste of labour to use it even for shed purposes. It has a life of only a few years, and should never be used except for the merest temporary erections.

88. Have you any opinions on the fiscal question? Are you a Free-trader or a Protectionist?—That depends on the particular article.

89. Supposing that Oregon pine is unduly competing with our rimu, and mills have to be closed in consequence of milling becoming unprofitable, and therefore the timber has to be burnt: do you not think it would be far better to consider whether we should not put a duty on, so long as we sell the local timber at a fair price?—I think that the proper way to prevent this competition with Oregon is to take care that we sell a better, or as good an article. Hitherto no care has been taken with the article which is sold that it is absolutely reliable. As soon as we can rely on New Zealand timber, then we should not seek these outside sources at all. The remedy is within our own hands.

90. If the millers take all the steps you recommend, and still could not make their business profitable, do you think then that the country might consider the imposition of a duty?—They would not find that if they sold a good article; we should be only too willing to buy it.

91. At any rate, the timber should not be burnt?—Certainly not.

92. And if it is true that valuable timber is threatened by fire because the milling is unprofitable, then the matter of duty should receive attention?—Yes.

*Hon. the Chairman:* I do not think that has been shown anywhere.

93. *Mr. Field.* No, I am putting a suppositious case. Of course, the Commission has not arrived at the North, where we are feeling the difficulty. What have you to say to the statement that rimu is probably second to no timber in the world except English oak? Do you think that is a fair statement, or is it exaggeration?—No, but it wants qualifying. The heart of timber cut from a small tree is a very different thing from the heart cut from a large tree. The tree must be matured. If they cut down immature trees they get an inferior timber, and it is impossible for us to determine that in the yard; therefore that must be seen to in the mill-yards. If the statement was made that the heart of well-matured large trees of rimu was equal to oak, I should agree with that, but the heart of small immature trees is distinctly inferior to oak.

94. *Mr. Leyland.* I think you are wrong in saying that we can get all the different qualities of timber out of one tree. I think it depends on the district, and whether the aspect is northerly or southerly; and there is also a special kind of soft white kauri which comes from a special district?—Yes, I said that. I said that the red and the white timber can be obtained from the same tree, but the soft or silver kauri is from a different district.

95. With reference to builders' discounts: builders have to spend a good deal of time running to the yard and attending to such matters, and therefore should have a special discount?—Oh, yes! I do not disagree with their getting the discount. I only stated it as a fact that they did get it.

96. If there is no discrimination shown between the builders in Christchurch there would be no fault to find?—Oh, no! that is their lookout.

97. Would you lay the same emphasis on winter cutting for New Zealand trees, for evergreen trees, as for deciduous trees?—Yes, undoubtedly, although the difference is not so marked as in deciduous trees; still there is a considerable difference between the growing period and the period of rest.

98. But the rest is very small. At the conference held in Wellington some years ago specimens were shown of trees as active apparently in winter as in summer. Professor Kirk states that the sap does not rise or fall, but undergoes a chemical change?—Probably all that would apply more forcibly to rimu grown in the tropical climate in the north. The sap does not disappear in evergreens, of course, as in deciduous trees, but it is nevertheless quiescent.

99. With regard to the 2s. extra for seasoning or stacking, you think that the timber should be selected?—Yes. I do not object to the charge of 2s. at all; I think it is perfectly fair, especially if the timber is really selected.