

[Document from Californian and Oregon Universities *re* timber-tests submitted to Mr. Seager for his opinion, to be given Commission later on.]

100. Do you not think that engineers are glad to get long lengths of Oregon for work where steel girders would not do—for bridges, *e.g.*?—I do not think that bridge-builders would use Oregon. If there is any part which is confined, it will rot.

101. The steel girders are imported, are they not?—Oh, yes!

102. And the objection to Oregon is that money is going out of the country?—Yes.

103. The Oregon has to be manipulated, and gives a large amount of work?—Yes, and there is also a certain amount of manipulation needed for steel girders, too—cutting and drilling, and so on. They could not be put in as imported.

104. Do you not think it is better for us to import Oregon direct rather than get long lengths from Australia?—Yes, undoubtedly, if it is required.

105. You would not advocate any interference with the importation of Oregon if it is required?—No, certainly not; there are certain circumstances in which we wish to use it.

106. Seeing that there has, according to the British Commission's report, been a general rise in the price of timber, is it to be wondered at that our timber-prices have increased?—No, that is only natural; we should naturally expect timber to be higher now than it was years ago.

107. If Oregon cannot be sold under a certain price, do you think it interferes with the sale of the cheaper line of rimu?—The line of rimu is now the same price—the good line. Rimu must be, I should say, 2s. per hundred cheaper than Oregon to make up the same value to the builders. Oregon cuts so much more freely and quickly, and the sticks are straighter. I think he would be willing to give a difference of 2s. per hundred.

108. You think Oregon affects the local timber industry then?—I certainly think it interferes to some extent; but we cannot have the enormous output of timber we had when there were those tremendous building operations in swing. I say that Oregon, if imported and sold at the same price as now, must interfere with the local timber industry to some extent. But I certainly would not prohibit Oregon coming in. The merchants will be willing to import as much as is asked for, and if it is asked for, there evidently is need for the importation.

109. *Mr. Clarke.*] According to your experience, it is practically impossible to get well-seasoned timber?—Yes, qualifying that by stating that it may be more easy now than in the past, because the merchants are taking more care.

110. And for long lengths, you think we can substitute steel joists?—Yes.

111. Is it not necessary to have ready access to long lengths for roofs—*e.g.*, where steel could not very well be used, such as tie-beams?—Not now, to any great extent. Where we could not get timber readily we should make the roof an iron construction.

112. Would it be easy to get a piece of local timber 40 ft. by 12 in. by 6 in.?—You could not get that here except in kauri.

113. You could not get it in Christchurch?—No, you would have to wait until it came from the North.

114. And that means considerable delay?—Undoubtedly.

115. Then, would it not be better to encourage the use of timber that could be stacked readily by importing in larger quantities, which practice would also conserve the kauri for better purposes?—Oh, yes! I would not do anything to stop the importation of timber, because there are some circumstances in which it would be advisable to use imported timber.

116. You know that, according to the Lands Department's reports, our timber is practically limited to a little over one generation?—Yes, I know that.

117. Would it not then be advisable to secure permanent supplies by means of afforestation?—Yes, undoubtedly.

118. *Mr. Morris.*] In your opinion, you said all timbers should be sorted at the mill?—Yes.

119. Have you had any experience of milling-work at all?—I have seen them working, that is all.

120. And you told us it would cost next to nothing to do it?—I cannot conceive how it could cost very much, and the value of the sorting would be out of all proportion to the very slight cost incurred. It would increase the value of the timber enormously, and the cost must be infinitesimal to mark it to show the kind of timber it is.

121. Does not the merchant sort the timber?—Their practice is to throw on one side sticks which are obviously bad. That is, they would not stack a stick which was obviously bad, but they could certainly not discriminate between the different varieties and classes of timber as they ought to be discriminated, and placed in different classes at the mill, as heart, outside, or cut from the butt or from the top of the tree. The timber is so different in quality in those different parts, and could not be differentiated when the sticks are cut except by an expert in timber-sorting.

122. You told us that timbers were retailed here at 9s. 6d., and now were retailed at 14s. 6d.?—Yes.

123. That is less than the usual discount?—Yes.

124. Bringing it to 13s. 6d.?—Yes.

125. Do you think that this increased price has interfered with building operations?—No, I do not think it is the price of timber only; but the increase is the cost of timber, wages, and everything else, that is the determining factor.

126. Have you experienced any difficulty in getting long lengths of timber, say, rimu, from the West Coast?—I have never used any long lengths of rimu, only marked sizes which could be readily obtained; I have never wanted any rimu, say, 50 ft. in length.

127. The reason advanced, that Oregon should be imported because of its long lengths, does