

22. Sixpence to 8d. per foot?—Yes, that is figured oak.

23. In view of the fact that our kauri is being rapidly cut out, and as we have only a limited supply of rimu, do you think it desirable that we should make some permanent reserves?—I can only speak of manufactories and timber-yards. I have not given the bush question much attention.

24. As a manufacturer, and in view of the fact that you might be entirely dependent upon imported timbers for your supply, do you not think it desirable that we should make some permanent reserves of our own forests?—No doubt it would be good if it could be done, but I do not know anything about the milling business.

25. They tell us that kauri will be cut out in about fifteen or twenty years at the outside?—They told us that when I was an apprentice.

26. We have had thorough surveys?—I have not made a study of that aspect of the question, so that any answer I might give would be of little value to you.

27. Have you experienced any difficulty with regard to seasoned timbers?—The position in Christchurch is this: that when a builder wants material he asks for matchlining or anything that has been thoroughly seasoned, and he will not take it unless it is thoroughly seasoned. The whole of the timber that is put through our local sawmills in respect to moulding lines, weather-boards, and suchlike is thoroughly dried timber before it is put into the hands of the builders, and they will not take it unless it is dry. The timber that goes out of our yards is practically dry. In the old days when a man took a contract he stacked the timber on the ground, and thereby dried it; but if you go about the City of Christchurch now you will not find these stacks, for the reason that the timber is now supplied thoroughly dry.

28. Do you sell seasoned timbers at those rates?—Yes, at the rates on our list.

29. Do you not make any difference in Christchurch between seasoned and unseasoned timbers?—Yes, a man will not buy unseasoned timber.

30. With regard to the price?—The people will not buy it. It is always dried before it is sold. The prices show one price for unseasoned—viz., 16s. 6d.—and for seasoned timber 18s. 6d.

31. That is 2s. per hundred difference?—Yes.

32. Assuming that it takes 10,000 ft. for a five-roomed house?—That is rather on the low side.

33. Say an ordinary five-roomed house, with 12 by 12 rooms, that would make a difference of £10 on the cost of the material of that house?—The position is this: Nobody ever buys seasoned scantlings or seasoned rough boards, because it is not necessary. If you refer to my figures you will see that there is only some six or seven thousand feet in that list that I have got down there that requires to be seasoned. It is totally unnecessary to season the remainder.

34. That makes about £6 difference then. Statements have been made that if seasoned timber was insisted upon people would not buy it because of the increased price?—That is not so here, and I am speaking of what I know.

*Mr. Ell:* That is entirely opposed to the statements made in Invercargill.

35. *Mr. Hanan.*] If it is a fair question, Mr. Page, from whence do you obtain your timber-supplies?—What timbers do you refer to? We get red-pine from Greymouth, and from Pelorus, but principally from Greymouth.

36. Do you draw anything from Otago and Southland?—No.

37. Have you ever done so?—No.

38. Have you any difficulty in getting supplies from the West Coast, and if so, what is the nature of the timber you have difficulty in procuring?—The West Coast only supplies us with red-pine, and we have no difficulty whatever in getting that from the West Coast.

39. Have they lowered their prices within the last twelve months, or have they increased them?—I cannot tell you. The price used to be 8s. all round, f.o.b., but now it is 6s. 9d. for the scantlings and rough stuff, and 8s. 6d. for the dressing lines.

*Mr. Mander:* That is less.

40. *Mr. Hanan.*] Has your trade or business increased during the last two or three years in imported timbers?—Very little in oak and cedar. Lately we have gone in for Oregon. Our sales of Oregon have increased, and that is an imported timber.

41. Would that be during the last twelve months?—Yes, during the last twelve months.

42. Your sales of Oregon timber are increasing, then?—Yes.

43. There has been a slump in the building trade?—Yes.

44. Did that slump take place before Oregon began to come in here in quantities?—It gradually came on. I do not think that Oregon had much effect upon the building trade one way or another.

45. The importation of Oregon does not affect you?—Yes, that is so. The tightness of money is the cause of the slackness of trade.

46. I suppose to-day the requirements, generally speaking, are met?—I think so. Of course, there is some little amount of building going on, but not much.

47. Do you manufacture furniture?—Not actually furniture. We employ cabinetmakers, but we confine ourselves mostly to fittings, mantelpieces, and that kind of thing.

48. For sashes, what do you find is the best kind of timber?—There are several timbers that are very good. Californian redwood is good timber for that purpose.

49. Is there much of that coming into New Zealand?—No, there is not a great amount.

50. Is it increasing?—I cannot tell you that.

51. What about Oregon for window-sashes?—I have not seen it used much here.

52. What do you use here principally?—American yellow-pine, Californian redwood, and Baltic.

53. Have you a high opinion of kauri?—I think there are not many finer woods than kauri