

189. Can you give us any idea of the amount of kauri you purchase and that passes through your hands in twelve months?—I do not know that I should say if I knew. I think I should refrain from answering that question.

190. You told us that the cost of your timber was increased because of some inferior pieces in the 8s. 6d. lot; now, is it not a fact that sometimes you find some superior pieces in the lower-price timber and place them in the higher grade?—When they come to the mill after drying if they are curled we then do not send them to the mill for dressing purposes, as it would be a waste to do so. We put timber of that kind with the rough timber.

191. Is there not a certain degree of regrading by placing timber for which you paid 6s. 9d. at the mill in a higher grade?—There is no danger of the mill making that mistake. It is the reverse way.

192. Then, the grading at the mill itself is always against you?—We sort the timber, and the agent for the miller sees to it. We get them to make any needful alteration.

193. You buy timber at 8s. 6d.?—Yes.

194. Sometimes you have to throw out pieces because they are not fit?—Yes, that is so.

195. Is it not a fact that there are some superior pieces in the lower grades which you can lift up?—Very few indeed.

196. There are some?—I have not run across them. There may be some. When you come to work out a cargo you generally find that the miller is not a liberal grader: he works more to the higher grades.

197. Do you class your timber as it arrives, or do you take the mill classing?—We class it when it arrives. If the classification is not correct, there is a reclass.

198. Do you obtain all your West Coast timber from the one man?—No.

199. It is possible, then, to obtain timber from the West Coast from more than one agency?—There are four sources. There is an association, and there are people supplying timber outside of the association.

200. Are you interested in sawmills?—No.

201. *Mr. Mander.*] Have you heard of timber being imported from Australia to Christchurch and sold at less money than it can be purchased for at the mills in Kaipara?—I have heard a lot of funny talk, but I do not take any notice of the man in the street.

202. Considering there is 3s. freight to Australia and 3s. back again do you think it possible for such a thing to take place?—Utterly impossible. You could not do it.

203. Do you find any difficulty in getting your orders supplied from the Kaipara?—I have had no difficulty.

204. You heard Mr. Seager say that Oregon was coming into competition with rimu in Christchurch. Do you believe that to be the case to any great extent?—There is a limited amount of business doing in Christchurch at the present time, and Oregon has got a big slice out of it, but I do not think there will be much brought in.

205. You think that unseasoned scantlings put into a building in Christchurch would rot in ten or twelve years?—I am sure it would not.

206. Do you think if it were seasoned that it would last fifty or sixty years?—I have not lived long enough.

207. Do you think there would be that difference?—It is nonsense to talk like that.

208. Suppose you frame a house with red-pine?—It gets thoroughly weathered before the building is finished. It will be thoroughly dried by the time the building is covered in.

209. You are aware that kauri has gone up in price during the last few years?—Yes.

210. You were asked if you believed in an export duty. You are aware that there is already an export duty on kauri timber logs of 5s. and 3s. on fitches?—I do not know anything about the kauri trade, and I do not feel inclined, therefore, to wade into deep water.

211. Considering the royalties on kauri timber have gone up during the last twelve or fourteen years from 6d. to 3s. 6d., do you not think that would account to some extent for the increased prices of the timber at the present time?—Of course, it must do so.

212. You are aware that there is a great risk of fire in the bush, there is also the loss of sap, and many other contingencies in connection with the trade?—I am not surprised.

213. Are you aware that benchmen's wages have gone up from £1 10s. to £2 10s.?—I know that all wages have gone up.

214. Do you find that the cost of handling timber in your yard has very much increased?—Everything that has to do with labour at all has very much increased.

215. Do you have to employ any more hands now to handle the same quantity of timber that you handled ten or twenty years ago?—I cannot well answer that question because our stacking is done by contract. The contractor having to pay extra wages the contract price has had to go up.

216. In purchasing rimu have you ever discriminated between inside sap and outside sap in the rimu log?—My experience of red-pine is that you sometimes get what some people call heart quite away out from the bark, and again you get timber that is only just missing the bark that is a good, sound timber.

217. In such cases I suppose you have a difficulty in discriminating between inside and outside sap?—From the side view you could not tell the difference.

218. In regard to a miller supplying a builder in Christchurch with timber, if he had to select long lengths and keep a retail yard do you suppose he would charge a very much higher price than the merchant, or could he do it at the same price he is now selling it to you for?—He would have to charge an extra price.

219. *Mr. Field.*] We heard this morning that there were three classes of timber in rimu—viz., the heart, the timber which was neither heart nor sap, and also sap close under the bark. You have told us that there is good timber to be got right close out to and near the bark. Would you