

58. Have you ever tried it?—No.

59. Have you ever obtained timber from the South?—No, we have from the Coast and from Havelock.

60. Is there a big market here for timber from the Coast?—I am not in a position to answer that.

61. Do you think the recent reductions in connection with the railway freights on timber has helped the building trade?—I do not think it has had any effect one way or the other.

62. Do you suggest any alterations in regard to the railway freights on timber?—No, I have not considered the matter.

63. *Mr. Field.*] Are you a speculative builder?—No, I have never built any houses for speculative purposes.

64. You say that Oregon pine is better than our rimu for framing purposes?—Yes, it is more reliable.

65. Do you say it is not competing with our rimu?—To some extent it may be.

66. Well, take the house you built in 1906, all the framing there was red-pine?—Yes.

67. That was before you could get Oregon pine?—Yes.

68. If you built that house to-day the framing would be of Oregon?—Not necessarily; the client may not wish it.

69. You say the Oregon is better?—Yes, I certainly prefer it myself, but I would not use any undue influence over any client.

70. If you were putting up a house for your own use?—Then I would use Oregon pine.

71. And probably the customers would be guided by your advice in the matter?—I do not know. We have just completed a house for a client, and he had his own way, after forty-three years' experience of the New Zealand bush, and he had a house built of Oregon pine. He eliminated red-pine entirely from the job, and would not have it under any consideration.

72. Well, taking your own case, assuming you were building a house for yourself, you would certainly have built that house in 1906 of red-pine, and to-day of Oregon?—That might apply to myself, but not to any one requiring a house, simply because they would be deterred by the Oregon coming in in certain sizes.

73. It could be used for framing?—Yes.

74. Can it be said it does not compete with red-pine?—It does in a way, but not as much as it would if it was coming in in different sizes, such as 3 by 2 and 4 by 2.

75. But it is coming in in small sizes?—Not to my knowledge.

76. Have you not seen any inch boards?—Yes, but they have been cut here.

77. For what purposes do you consider red-pine better than Oregon?—We use it for all kinds of furnishing and finishing, for mantelpieces, wardrobes, &c.

78. In that case what are you going to do with the rough rimu?—I maintain that it would be used in preference to Oregon for certain work.

79. If Oregon was not here this rough rimu would be invaluable?—No doubt.

80. We were told this morning that timber adjacent to the bark in red-pine logs was so bad that it was practically criminal to put it in a building?—I think that red-pine is different from all other timbers so far as its sap is concerned. I have seen very little sappy red-pine. There is no comparison between the sap of red-pine and the sap of totara or kauri. In the case of rimu the sap is practically all good inside the bark.

81. Fit for building purposes?—Yes, all fit.

82. We had it on evidence also this morning, I think from Mr. Seager, that Oregon was very good for joinery work if properly treated and cut. Do you know anything about that branch of the subject?—In all my experience I have not seen it used for joinery work, with one exception, and that was for fine work, and then it was a failure. You cannot dress it beyond the chisel or the plane, because immediately you use a scraper or glass-paper you bring it out in holes and lumps all over, owing to its softness in certain parts as compared with other parts in the same piece of timber.

83. Then there is no danger of it coming into competition with red-pine?—That is so.

84. I did not think so, myself, and I was rather astonished at that evidence. You say the Oregon that comes in here is of a rough quality?—It is not so fine as some of the pines.

85. Do you think that the best Oregon—that is, heart—is kept in the country in which it grows?—I do not know what becomes of it.

86. It does not come here?—I have seen a considerable quantity of Oregon in Melbourne, and the Oregon we get here is similar to that, and all it ever was used for was for rough purposes.

87. Something was said about the strength of Oregon as comparing favourably with that of rimu. Have you ever seen any tests, or the results of any tests?—I am of opinion that the one is as strong as the other, but the Oregon is very much lighter.

88. A test was made in Wellington, at a foundry there, in the presence of fifty well-known business men, when it was found that the Oregon broke at a certain strain of so many tons, whilst the machinery they had was not equal to break the rimu?—All that I can say is that they had a very rotten bit of Oregon and a bit of very tough red-pine.

89. They were careful men?—I have worked amongst Oregon for ten years, and I have worked amongst red-pine since I was sixteen years of age, and I am now nearly fifty, and I am satisfied that in a fair test between Oregon and red-pine Oregon would beat it every time.

90. You have never made a test?—No, only in a rough-and-ready sort of way.

91. You said you thought that tracts of timber should be preserved?—What I said was that at the present time I understood that a great amount of bush was being sacrificed in the interest of settlement simply because it is far away from the market. I think that that hilly country should be left as it is for the present, allowing development to proceed, and thereby bringing the market in time to the timber.