

cut out, but will be burned out. There is another big question, but which I do not feel competent to deal with, and that is whether the land which it is proposed to conserve for bush areas would not give a better return to the country if opened for settlement. That seems to be the greatest question as to which would pay the country best, whether to have the land settled upon and so producing every year probably more than it does at present, or to keep that land tied up for the purpose of the timber on it.

64. Do I understand that you would be in favour of using our timber as we want it?—Certainly. As far as I can see, that seems to me to be the safer plan.

65. I suppose you would not object to the Government reserving a fair area of timbered land so long as they do it with care and without the risk of fire?—No, I would not have any objection to that. As I say, I think it is a question that requires a lot of consideration, and careful consideration at that, to see whether this land would not produce more if it was cleared and settled upon. The lands in Taranaki, I consider, are bringing in more from settlement now than if left in virgin forest. The unearned increment would not give us so much as if the lands were settled upon, and the only way to get settlement is to cut the timber off, otherwise it may be burned.

66. You agree with regard to timber lands held for milling purposes, that there is only one course open to them?—Yes, that is the only one way to get settlement—to cut it.

67. The main trouble you say in regard to Oregon pine is that it displaces our rough timber?—I said yesterday that I held very strongly to that opinion. If we are going to use Oregon pine in any large quantities, it will mean that it will only displace the red-pine that we are at present most anxious to use. If the sawmiller has no outlet for that rough class of red-pine, and we only use the clean timber, then he must of necessity charge us more for that clean timber, and although the public may be reaping the benefit through getting Oregon in at a lower rate than rough rimu, they would have to pay more for the dressed lines of rimu which Oregon is not suitable for.

68. I think you gave expression to the opinion that in the average rimu log there is a certain quantity of timber in the vicinity of the bark that it would be almost criminal to put into buildings?—Well, that, of course, never comes here—that part that is of no use is left at the sawmill and burned.

69. From your knowledge of the rimu logs, is there a large proportion of it which is unfit for building?—Yes, there is a lot of it in the log which never leaves the mill. It is left there in heaps, and in most places it is burned.

70. But is there not so-much timber that it is necessary to cut off with the bark?—Yes.

71. Where they can cut a square junk of timber they cut it?—Yes, if they can cut it clear.

72. Well, the timber they can cut in that form, is it good timber?—Yes. The timber that comes here, with few exceptions, is all right for building purposes. I have used any amount of it in buildings, and I should not like to be called a criminal.

73. *Mr. Leyland.*] I understood you to say just now that you owned a sawmill yourself?—Yes.

74. And that you are financially interested in some other sawmill?—Yes.

75. *Mr. Clarke.*] With regard to the extent of the sales in this district and in your particular business, do you sell most from your own sawmill?—Yes, mostly from my own sawmill.

76. Do you apportion the balance from sawmills in which you are interested financially?—No, not necessarily so. The other sawmills I am interested in send their timber here through an agent, and the agent sends the orders there, and they are executed by the sawmills. As a matter of fact, I order very little outside what I get from my own mill.

77. Then, in the case of your own mill you get two profits, the sawmiller's and the timber-merchant's?—Yes, and I run two risks.

78. With regard to the use of Oregon pine, you know, of course, that our annual consumption of timber is on the increase—our statistics show that?—I do not think the last twelve months will show that.

79. If it is an established fact—and I think we can easily find out—that all over the world the consumption of timber is increasing all the time, would there be any reason to suppose that this country is using less timber than any others?—No, I should think not.

80. Would it not be a fair inference that we should be increasing our timber-output?—Yes, if normal things obtain once again.

81. Is it not a fact that going a little beyond the normal in busy times there has been some difficulty in keeping the building trade going and supplying the timber?—None whatever here. If we have had a reasonable time to execute an order we have generally been able to do so.

82. Would not that depend on what might be called a "reasonable time"?—No, I do not think so.

83. Assuming that evidence has been adduced before this Commission in other places that difficulties of that kind have been experienced, then it would be fair to say that there have been difficulties in some parts of the Dominion in obtaining sufficient supplies?—That I have nothing to do with. I can only speak from a Christchurch point of view, and I consider that Christchurch has never had any difficulty in getting supplies, not within the last few years.

84. Look a little beyond the immediate surroundings, and from the point of view of a citizen of this Dominion: If the increasing demand for timber is likely to grow, would it not establish this fact, that the importation of the Oregon that is being carried on now would be barely sufficient to cope with the increasing demand?—I have not the figures to prove that, and it has never been proved to me that that is so, and I do not consider I am in a position to discuss it.

85. I think you said it would be advisable to clear the bush for the purpose of obtaining a better return from the land: do you apply that to all bush or only some bush?—I stated that it was a question that required very grave consideration—I did not give it as an opinion.

86. With regard to clearing the bush, have you any idea what would happen from a climatic point of view if we cleared all the bush?—No, but I have had considerable discussion with people as to climatic influences. What do you mean by "climatic" changes?