

140. You have never had such a letter?—No, not a suggestion of such a thing. It could not possibly come from the Builders' Association without my knowing it.

141. Do you purchase from the mills outside of those you are interested in yourself?—Yes, but not latterly, because there is not the demand for timber.

142. Do you know whether the members of your association are ever influenced as to purchasing from those mills because they are outside the Millers' Association?—I do not know of any mills that are outside the Millers' Association. They are either in one association or in another association.

143. There are outside mills?—I do not know of them.

144. You said just now, or at least I took it from what you said, that your men are working under an arbitration award?—Yes.

145. Do members of your association pay exactly according to that award, or in some cases do they pay higher wages than that specified in the award?—I have known of a few instances where men have been paid higher than the award. I do not know what the others do.

146. So that there is no real complaint so far as the timber-merchants are concerned as to the high rate of wages?—No. I consider that wages here are reasonable in our trade—that is, taken as a whole—although there might be certain instances that I would not consider right.

147. It is not suggested that an alteration should be made in wages so as to reduce the cost of timber?—Personally I should be sorry to see it done.

148. I understand that you are favourable to the bush land being used up for our requirements?—Yes.

149. You appreciate the fact that the time may come when there will be a scarcity of timber?—Yes. That is a point, however, that requires more consideration, because there are large tracts of the world where timber can be readily grown, and we have some of this land in New Zealand. The question arises whether it would not be better to get our timber from there in times to come.

150. Do you know sufficient of the bush country in the Dominion to give an opinion as to whether it would be wise after the big timber suitable for sawmilling had been cleared, to leave the remainder as a timber reserve for future use—that is, with the view of allowing the younger timber to grow up?—I should say not, unless there were special conditions attached to the land. Of course, the land might not be fit for anything else, and in that case it might be left, although I may say that the young bush gets terribly knocked about when felling the big timber. As a matter of fact, the small timber is generally damaged.

151. Is it a fact that the undergrowth is likely to come up and choke the young growth of timber left after the large trees are cut out?—I do not know that.

152. Have you an opinion on the subject of afforestation?—No, nothing more than I have already said.

153. If it can be shown that we have large tracts of land in New Zealand that are not so far used for ordinary cultivation—not even for grassing purposes—and that they are suitable for imported trees which might be planted and grown successfully, do you not think it wise that this Dominion should go in for such a scheme?—Most decidedly. It would be a great boon, and the country would be beneficially affected by it.

154. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] Have you generally been present at the meetings of your association at which rates have been fixed?—Yes.

155. On these occasions were there members present who thought the prices agreed upon too high?—No, I do not remember any member who thought the prices agreed upon too high, but I certainly remember many occasions where many members thought they were fixed too low.

156. There has been a difference of opinion then?—I do not think our association would be composed of humans if it were otherwise.

157. What timber area do you hold for the mill you yourself own?—I think it is 2,469 acres.

158. From the Crown?—No; freehold. I have cutting-rights over that freehold, none of which is Crown land. I think I have a lease of a very small bit of Crown land of about 200 acres, I should say, in addition to the other. It is an educational reserve.

159. You take, I believe, the outputs of mills which you are interested in?—My principal sources of supply are from my own mill, and apart from that I can get timber from any mill on the Coast. I do not contract to take any output of any mill, and I have no arrangements with any mills.

160. *Mr. Mander.*] Will sap rimu stand inside a building as long as heart rimu will stand outside?—Yes, I think so. It only wants to be kept away from the damp.

161. You have never discriminated between the inner circle and the outer circle of sap?—I do not know what the terms mean.

162. You consider all sap equal outside the heart?—I think there is more variation in the heart than in the sap.

163. In your experience, do you not think that there is sufficient hilly country in New Zealand on which to conserve timber without conserving valuable timbers for climatic purposes?—I do not know much about the areas of land that are hilly or otherwise.

164. Are you not aware that there are very large areas of hilly country containing timber that is not valuable for milling purposes?—I have no figures.

165. Do you not think it would be wise to take into consideration the advisability of conserving the hilly country for climatic purposes rather than some of the more valuable low lands?—I should certainly say so if it is not valuable land.

166. Would you be in favour of conserving our timber areas as much as possible, consistent with the requirements of the people of this Dominion?—You mean, provided the people of the country needed sufficient land for settlement.

167. Yes, and consistent with the requirements of the country for timber purposes, as well as for other purposes?—I do not know. As already stated, I cannot speak about the conservation of the bush until I see more definite statistics than those we at present have.