

34. Does the importation show any sign of easing off?—I think it is easing off, because there is no market either for Oregon or red-pine at the present time. The building trade has dropped off.

35. Do you think the building trade in Christchurch has been in any way affected by the increased price of timber: you say it has increased 15 per cent. in ten years?—I do not think the increased price of timber has affected the trade in any way.

36. It is the dull time?—Yes.

37. Do you think that, economically, it would be a good thing to-day for the sawmillers to sort their timber and grade it at the mills before it comes here?—Yes, to a certain extent it would.

38. Do you think it would pay to do so? Would you be prepared to pay the additional cost of the grading?—As far as I am concerned, it is not I that would pay for it.

39. Would the consumer be prepared to pay, do you think?—I think that in the majority of cases he would. As regards red-pine, the great trouble is that there is a lot of theory as regards sap and heart; what one man will call sap another will say is heart. If we were to condemn all that some people say is sap we should condemn fully three-fourths of the red-pine in New Zealand.

40. What is ordinarily termed sap is, as a matter of fact, very fair building-timber, is it not?—Yes. In fact, I have brought along to the Commission a sample to exemplify what I mean. [Samples produced and explained.]

41. With regard to this question of Oregon, you say that Oregon is used for the framing of buildings, and that to some extent it displaces our red-pine?—To a certain extent—not to such a great extent. It is used more for large sizes.

42. Still, it is used for framing?—In the better class of dwellings; but in, for instance, a four-roomed cottage, for the match-lining or anything of that sort I do not think there is much preference as regards Oregon and red-pine. Every one has the idea now that Oregon is the better timber, and people will use it in preference.

43. There is always a prejudice against the local article, is there not?—Yes.

44. And it is sold quite as cheaply here, I understand, as red-pine?—At the present time it is. That is only since these few shipments have come in, but in a few months I do not think it will be so cheap.

45. Of course, we are told, where Oregon is dearer than red-pine, that red-pine has nothing to fear; but where it is cheaper than red-pine we are asked, "Why put a duty on Oregon and prevent people building as cheaply as possible?" What do you say about that, and the effect it might have on our timber-mills and our milling-country? Do you know anything of the conditions which prevail in the North Island?—No. My experience has been in the South Island.

46. Have you given much thought to that question?—No, I cannot say that I have given any thought to it.

47. Do you yourself think it would be wise to provide for the compulsory seasoning of timber, or do you think the people have the remedy in their own hands at the present time?—I think the people have the remedy in their own hands.

48. *Mr. Leyland.*] With reference to the architects' conditions, you have managed, as the result of your association, to get conditions that apply equally all over the Dominion?—Yes.

49. Do those conditions apply to Government contracts?—Not as far as the Public Works Department are concerned; but several local bodies have adopted them.

50. Not Government Departments?—No.

51. Do you not think it desirable that they should?—Yes. We have approached the Government on the matter.

52. A friend of mine—a builder—tendered for the erection of the Post-office in Auckland, after giving a fortnight's work. He was the lowest tenderer, but no tender was accepted. Do you not think he should have had some remuneration for all that trouble?—Most decidedly. A builder is entitled to payment for his work as well as anybody else.

53. Do you think it desirable that the importation of Oregon should be restricted?—I do not think it would be desirable to prohibit it altogether.

54. Do you think the present duty is quite sufficient?—Yes.

55. Do you not think the present duty should be taken off the long lengths—the lengths that are so difficult to get in New Zealand timbers?—The association went into that matter some few months ago, and a recommendation went before the Federal Council, and it was recommended that the duty should be taken off altogether; but since then we have rather modified our views. I have the resolution here, "That this association is of opinion that any reduction in the duty on Oregon would not improve the building trade, as the price of dressing-lines in red-pine has already been and would be increased if millers could not find a market for the rough timber."

56. *Mr. Field.*] That is, the rough red-pine?—Yes.

57. *Mr. Leyland.*] With reference to those beams that you mentioned having had cut, were they heart or sap?—All heart.

58. Do you think, for the purposes of beams and for joists, that heart of Oregon is superior to sap rimu?—Yes, most decidedly.

59. Then, if a builder or proprietor wished to build a brick building, do you not think it would be folly to put in sap rimu if he could get Oregon at a slightly increased price?—Yes.

60. Then, if it would be better for the building, do you think it would be better to restrict the importation of Oregon?—Yes, that is what we think, as far as the builders are concerned; but we do not want to restrict the using of it.

61. The reason for asking you that is because there is a difficulty in getting large beams in rimu, especially in long lengths?—Yes; in fact, I have found myself that in ordering a large quantity of 12 by 2 or 12 by 3 you might order a dozen or so extra so as to get some heart, but it is very little heart you get.