

93. Did you not make a mistake when you said you paid more for 9 in. timber. Does not the difference in price commence at 12 in. in width?—Yes, that is right.

94. And over 22 ft. in length?—Yes. I think the last price-list stated 9 in., but there was a former price-list.

95. *Mr. Barber.*] You said you were a member of the Builders' Association?—Yes.

96. How many members are there in the association?—I could not say from memory, but I think 130.

97. And do they comprise the largest contractors in Christchurch?—Yes.

98. Mostly those who tender for large jobs?—Yes. You might say the whole of the large contractors are members of the association.

99. How many builders are there outside the association?—I have heard various statements. In fact, I have heard it said that at one time there were double the number outside; but I believe there is another association started, and its membership has dwindled down to something like half a dozen.

100. What was the other association formed for?—It was more for the small builders.

101. What is the fee for joining your association?—Two guineas for membership, and the other is only one guinea.

102. The builders outside of your association must have been dissatisfied with the conditions?—No, they were not. There are a lot even outside of the association who look at paying two guineas—it is too much of a tax on them. Speaking of our own association and the majority of the members, it is not for the individual benefits that are to be derived or for the receiving of discounts from the timber-merchants; but we recognise that if we can only uphold our present conditions instead of reverting back to the conditions which existed two years ago, it is worth two guineas for us to combine into an association.

103. You claim that the members of your association are the most experienced builders in Christchurch?—Yes.

104. What reasons can you give for a body of men who are experienced in the building trade reversing a decision they came to previously with regard to the importation of Oregon pine?—I think it was more in sympathy with the local product that, if they were to advocate the duty being taken off the Oregon pine altogether, it would affect the local timber.

105. Was it the outcome of a threat from the timber-merchants that they would increase the price to you of all timber you wanted for dressing purposes?—No, we have had no intimation from the timber-merchants.

106. Are you aware that the alteration of that resolution is in direct conflict with a similar organization in New Zealand? Take Dunedin, the resolution passed by the association there was very strongly in favour of the removal of the duty on Oregon pine. Are you aware that your association is acting counter to the wishes of the trade in other parts of the colony?—No. Of course, I think, so far as our association is concerned, they would have no objection to the duty being taken off Oregon pine in the large sizes, so that if anything required to be cut up into the smaller sizes it would then give work to the millers here.

107. You do not object to Oregon being imported duty-free in the large sizes?—No, not in the large sizes. The reason why the resolution was altered in that respect was that we thought that if the duty was taken off altogether on the large sizes, we should not object to it being put on the small sizes, so that if it was brought in it would give a certain amount of work to the saw-millers here in cutting it up; and that also would increase the price of it, so that it would counteract against ordinary red-pine for building purposes.

108. With regard to seasoned timber, would it be possible for any one to tell, when a shipment of Oregon pine arrived, whether it had been seasoned and had become sodden with salt water?—Yes, I think we could distinguish the difference by cutting it.

109. You say that seasoned timber has a great advantage over unseasoned timber?—Yes.

110. And you say it takes nine months to properly season timber?—Yes.

111. If you had a large contract in which you wanted long lengths, you say you would have to order them after you got the job?—Yes.

112. And the job would be proceeding while you were waiting for them?—Yes.

113. And those beams would be put in without being seasoned?—Yes.

114. Is it possible under any conditions to get those long beams in all heart?—Not in all heart, as some theorists ask us to believe it should be.

115. And it would be put into a building in a condition of heart and sap in unseasoned timber?—Yes.

116. And that would be covered up almost soon after it is put in?—Yes.

117. And that would be a natural weakness to the building?—Yes.

118. *Mr. Arnold.*] In regard to removing the duty on the large sizes of Oregon only, have you considered whether it is not a fact that the better class of timber comes in in smaller sizes?—I have never heard that the better class of timber came in in the small sizes.

119. For instance, if you were having 4 by 3 brought in, would it not be necessary for them to send a better class of timber than they do in the large block?—I do not think so. I have understood as regards Oregon that there are about four or five different grades, and the extra first grade is a very fine grade of Oregon. That is used in America for joinery-work, I believe, but I am certain it could not compete with red-pine, because I happen to be acquainted with one of the officers on the boat that came here, and he told me that the sister boat in the company he was in left with the same quantity of Oregon pine on board, but it was valued at double the price of the Oregon that was brought here.

120. You think, then, that even at the present moment we are getting an inferior class of Oregon pine—that they do not send their best timbers here?—It is not the very best Oregon pine.

121. You say their timber is felled and then brought down by water?—Yes.