

Of course, it is this way: if we cannot get anything to replace it it would be better to do so. For instance, some four or five years ago I had a building in which kauri was provided for in 40 ft. lengths. I ascertained that the lowest quotation I could get for kauri delivered in Christchurch was £1 9s. at that time. I asked the architect whether he would object to Oregon being substituted for kauri in respect to the rough work, and he agreed. I landed the Oregon from Melbourne in Christchurch, after paying the duty, at £1 2s.

179. That is 7s. less?—Yes.

180. You consider that using kauri for such purposes as that is a waste of extremely valuable timber?—Yes, if we can get more suitable and cheaper timber.

181. You consider that, when beams of kauri are put into a building, and when kauri can be used for joinery-work and for coach-building, as well as for various descriptions of furniture, to put it into beams would be a great waste, as much so as if mahogany were used for some purpose when a rougher timber would serve the purpose as well?—Yes.

182. We are told by the Lands Department that the kauri-milling industry at the present rate of output will not last more than fifteen years, although it is not suggested that there may not be some kauri-mills here and there twenty-five years from now; still the industry, as we see, has only about a fifteen-years life. In view of that fact, and of the fact that we cannot obtain any imported timber so suitable for our various purposes, I want to ask you as a builder and a citizen whether you do not consider it desirable to place some duty on the exportation of kauri?—I think most decidedly we should have the benefit of the timber.

183. With regard to the use by the Telegraph Department of totara, I saw a totara pole at Dunedin the other day 16 in. square used as a telegraph-pole, whilst an ironbark timber one-half the size would have served the purpose as well. Seeing the value of totara for cabinet-work, do you not think it was waste on the part of the Government to use it for such a purpose?—Yes, decidedly. They could get jarrah for less.

184. The reason for the large size was because of the brittleness of totara as compared with hardwood timbers?—Yes, that is so.

185. It also took up a considerable portion of the footpath. Now, with regard to making some reservations—I do not suggest making reservations on rich agricultural lands, but reservations of forests upon broken and extremely steep and hilly country, reservations, say, of rimu for the future needs of the country. I may point out here that we have planted up to the present only about 9,400 acres of land for our future needs, and the Department tells us that the nearest date at which any of that timber will mature is forty years hence. In view of that fact and of the increasing requirements of an increasing population, do you not think that it would be a wise thing for the Government to make some permanent reserves?—Yes, I think so. I think our association has sent in a requisition to the Government.

186. *Mr. Hanan.*] Do you know of any timber-merchants that have closed down during the last three years in Christchurch?—No, I cannot say that I know of any that have closed down.

187. They are still continuing their business?—I know of a good few builders.

188. Who have gone to the wall?—Yes.

189. The result of extreme cutting in the trade?—More than 5 per cent.

190. Can you give us any information regarding the durability of timber—I mean New Zealand timber—when placed in the ground?—It all depends upon the nature of the timber in the first place and the nature of the ground it is put into.

191. What have you found yourself?—We always recommend totara as the best timber for standing in the ground. I may say that I have seen kauri taken out of the ground that had been in for thirty years, and it was found to be as sound as the day it was put in.

192. How does rimu stand?—There is only a certain class of rimu that would stand any length of time—that is, the very rough heart, with a resiniferous texture. I think some of that will stand as long as other timbers.

193. Have you seen anything of imported timbers in the ground: can you speak of their durability?—I have seen a good deal of jarrah and ironbark. They are good timbers, but Oregon does not stand in the ground—in fact, Oregon will not stand exposed in any way for any length of time.

194. Have you any experience of timber under water, say, as piles?—I have had no experience of timber under water.

195. Have you used Southland timber, and if so, how does it compare with the West Coast timbers?—Well, it is a much harder and coarser-grained timber than the Coast timber. In fact, very few architects in Christchurch will allow Southland timber to be used. There is one firm of architects here who provide in their specifications that no timber grown south of Christchurch shall be used on the job.

196. What is the name of the firm?—I do not care to mention the name.

197. Is there any reason why it should be kept secret?—I do not think there is any particular reason.

198. Do you know if the firm has any connection with the West Coast millers?—That I could not say.

199. Is that the only firm you know of?—I think there is another one of the same kind.

200. Is there a member of that firm giving evidence to-day?—That I could not say. I do not know if his name is on the list.

201. *Mr. Leyland.*] I want to try and clear up a doubt about the difference in the cost of tongued and grooved here and in Dunedin. First, here it is dry and there it is green, and we have evidence to show that there is a difference of 2s. in favour of Dunedin, and that the dry timber is worth the difference?—Yes.

202. And 8d. railage, with extra handling costing 3d.; then there is the discount on the extra 4s., which is equal to 4d., so that they are really putting 4s. 6d. on the cost, and the timber-