

96. What I want to get at is, what is to become of our rough rimu if the Oregon takes its place for the purpose we have been using it for?—You mean the ordinary rimu used in the construction of the framework of a house?

97. Any rough rimu that is used for framework?—Yes.

98. Until last year that was used always?—Yes.

99. Now you say you prefer the Oregon?—I said I preferred Oregon, but I would not take the duty off the Oregon. I also said that if the rimu were seasoned it would be all right, but the trouble is that it is not seasoned when it is put into the houses.

100. How long do you say it takes to season an ordinary 3 by 2 or 4 by 2?—It ought to go through a good summer and winter, at any rate—nine months.

101. Before it is actually covered over with boards?—Yes, to be thoroughly seasoned.

102. What about the Oregon? It is cut green in the forests and is brought over here in a week or two?—Oregon is totally different. It would not twist in drying or warp like rimu.

103. Would you prefer to put that in green, rather than rimu?—Yes.

104. Coming back to the main question: we have used rimu all these years, and now it is being displaced by Oregon. What are we to do about it?—It could still be used, without having a prohibitive duty.

105. You think the duty might be adjusted?—Yes.

106. I suppose you are aware that the Americans put a big duty on our wool, which prevents our inferior wools being used by them at all?—Yes. I believe in protection every time.

107. If you were satisfied that this Oregon pine was shutting up our mills, and our timber was going to be burnt as a consequence, and the money invested in milling machinery and tramways and so forth was going to be lost, would you not think it would be fair to take into consideration the question of protecting our industry?—Certainly. I was asked a direct question with regard to my knowledge of Oregon and red-pine for building purposes, and I have given my answer conscientiously. When it comes to the protection of the sawmilling industry in this country, that is a different matter altogether.

108. You are aware that Oregon can be sold as cheaply as rimu? That is so, is it not?—Yes.

109. Are you aware that in Dunedin it is very much dearer?—Not being in the building trade I am not conversant with that.

110. In Dunedin, where it is dearer, those who want to help the timber industry are told that we have nothing to fear, because the Oregon is so much dearer. Here, where it is not any dearer, or is cheaper, we are told, "Why should you put a duty on Oregon when the people want to build as cheaply as they can"? What do you say to that? Do you think all these matters should be taken into consideration and a fair thing done in the adjustment of the duty?—Yes.

111. *Mr. Leyland.*] With regard to your kauri requirements, you like to get the soft, white kauri or the soft, yellow kauri that does not warp?—That is right.

112. One of the reasons why you are unable to get it is this: for building and construction purposes we have so many orders for specified lengths that when we get a nice, soft log suitable for your purposes we are compelled to take it in order to get the specified lengths for constructive purposes. If Oregon is admitted and is a good substitute for these specified lengths, do you not think it a good thing, for cabinetmakers could get the supply they require of that soft and white and yellow kauri?—Certainly I do. I understand, however, that you can get these in Melbourne. Is that not so?

113. No; that is a fairy story. Would not that modify your opinions in regard to imposing a duty on exported timbers if you found we could replace the loss by importing Oregon?—No, I do not believe in kauri being exported at all.

114. Do we not require large quantities of Australian timbers such as jarrah and other hardwoods?—Yes.

115. If we impose a duty on kauri, do you not think it likely they will impose a duty on the timbers we require from them?—I do not think so.

116. This desire to get timber is becoming keener in all countries?—But I am speaking of the matter of kauri, but not on account of reciprocity, and in a few years you must admit that our kauri will be very low.

117. I ask you if you do not think it fair that we should weigh this consideration?—No, not in this case.

118. In view of the fact that if the timber is not milled it will be burned—would you prefer to see it burned?—No, certainly not.

119. There is a report here which shows there are 2,138 sawmillers in the Auckland District, or men employed in the industry, as against less than nine hundred in Westland and Canterbury combined. Would you throw those 2,138 sawmillers out of employment by placing a duty on kauri and burning it?—By agreeing to an export duty on kauri you mean you would be throwing so many men out of employment?

120. Yes?—If the kauri gets wiped out of the country altogether, where are they going to get employment then?

121. But it will still be gradually milled?—I should still be in favour of an export duty.

122. The sawmillers in the Auckland District have invested thousands of pounds under the present existing conditions, and if you alter those conditions would it be fair to put on a duty and stop that milling unless you are prepared to compensate them?—Well, it would be impossible that that kauri could be used for a number of other purposes for which it is not used at the present time without a reduction in price.

123. Though you will admit Oregon pine?—Not free.

124. If you prohibit it you are increasing the difficulty. If you make it easy of admission you find a substitute for the kauri and relieve your own trouble indirectly?—Not a substitute for the kauri, but perhaps a substitute for rimu.