

No. 23.

DEAR SIR,—

County Council Office, Mackenzie, Cheviot, 27th March, 1913.

In reply to your letter of the 19th instant, *re* plantation cut for milling purposes at Cheviot, I have to state,—

The plantation consisted of some 36 acres, comprising a narrow strip of good heavy land with a creek running through same. Planted some forty years ago. Trees were put in about 10 ft. apart, and have been thinned from time to time. The average size of trees cut, 2 ft. to 4 ft. diameter at the stump; height, up to 110 ft. Output, 600,000 superficial feet of milling-timber and some 600 cords of firewood.

The timber sold readily at 13s. per 100 superficial feet, and has been used for general building purposes (houses, woolsheds, stables, &c.). Firewood produced 15s. to 20s. per cord.

The majority of the trees were *Pinus insignis*. There were a few *muricata*, and these proved the better timber, but were considerably the smaller.

Experience has proved that the trees were planted too far apart, and this, together with the thinning, caused limbs which produced knots. Where the trees were planted thickest the best timber was obtained. I consider 4 ft. to 6 ft. apart would be sufficient.

The trees in the forty years had reached their limit of usefulness, and were going back if anything, some of the large trees being inclined to be soft. Under similar conditions thirty to thirty-five years would be sufficient to allow a plantation to grow before cutting to mill.

I have examined the timber in woolsheds and stables after being in position for three to four years, and could observe very little shrinkage, although it had been put in practically green from the log. I notice the timber absorbs a great deal of oil in painting.

The sawmiller, who is also a builder of long experience, considers the timber, when kept off the ground and painted, to be equal to rimu for general building purposes. He pays royalty of 1s. 6d. per 100 superficial feet and 5s. per cord on firewood.

Trusting the above will be of some slight service to you.

I am, &c.,

W. M. COTTRELL,

County Clerk.

The Chairman, Forestry Commission, Wellington.

No. 24.

DEAR SIR,—

450 Armagh Street East, 17th March, 1913.

I am very sorry that I cannot lay my hands on the notes I made some years ago regarding the use of *Pinus insignis* timber for butter-boxes. However, the following are the particulars. Mr. T. W. Adams, who is a member of your Commission, is familiar with the facts, although he may not be able to go into details.

I have always been impressed with *Pinus insignis* as a tree which will ultimately prove of great commercial value to the Dominion. It is admirably adapted to the climate and soils of Canterbury, in fairly good land producing timber of commercial value in thirty or forty years.

Believing that the timber of this tree would be found suitable for butter-boxes, I resolved to put it to the test. I accordingly asked Mr. Wason (of Lower Rakaia) to have a box made of this timber the same size as those in common use for the packing of butter. Mr. Wason did as I requested, selecting timber from a *Pinus insignis* which had been blown down three years previously. I kept the box in my office for a couple of months, and then sent it to the Central Dairy Company, Addington, where experiments were about to be tried with different timbers. Mr. Ellis, the then secretary, somewhat demurred at packing butter in a box made of such timber; however, after some persuasion and a guarantee against loss, it was packed in the usual way, and placed with the others in the cool chamber, where they remained for the usual time occupied in transport to England. I was present at the opening (by experts) and the testing, and had the satisfaction of hearing my box pronounced to be of excellent quality, quite equal to the best. *Pinus insignis* takes a beautiful polish.

No doubt you are aware that Mr. Giles, of Parnassus, uses a large quantity of this timber for farm and other buildings. It is said that it does not shrink nearly so much as the ordinary timber in use for house-building.

Yours, &c.,

Mr. P. Turner, Secretary, Forest Commission, Warner's Hotel.

M. MURPHY.

No. 25.

The Members of the Forestry Commission.

Greymouth, 25th March, 1913.

We respectfully beg to bring under your notice these few facts that seriously interest the sawmillers of this district, and ask you to give them your favourable consideration.

We notice that in the course of your itinerary through the Dominion the matter of placing an export duty on white-pine has been brought before you, with the idea of preventing altogether, or at least seriously limiting, the export of this timber. We would point out in the first instance that until very recently this timber was practically valueless, owing to the very limited demand for it in New Zealand, due to the ravages of the borer and the very short life of the timber in this damp climate. Latterly a demand for a small quantity for butter-boxes has arisen, but this requires only 12 in. and 14 in. boards, of which the average white-pine bush does not produce 40 per cent. to meet the severe classification to which this class of timber is subjected, no board being accepted unless absolutely free from all defects. The production of these butter-boards thus leaves 60 per cent., or more than half the log output, on the sawmiller's hands, for which no market exists in New Zealand, or, if it does,