

19. Have you any of the timber in stock now? Would you mind supplying the Commission with a small sample—say, a butter-box?—My timber is not quite wide enough. I have used all the wide stuff—6 by $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 8 by $1\frac{1}{2}$.

20. It need not necessarily be a butter-box. Could we have a cigar-box?—I would do that with pleasure.

21. *Mr. Adams.*] You say the black-birch is suitable for stringers, bridges, posts, &c. Can you suggest why the Australian timber is cutting it out?—It is a very valuable timber, and I am sure if it were put on the market it would be preferable to the Australian timber. I would use it myself, because I know it is a good timber. People will give you 7s. for a black-birch strainer at the present time, 7 ft. long and about 9 in. diameter.

22. How do you account for the Australian wood cutting it out in the way it is doing, according to your evidence?—Because the Australian timber has been placed on the market, and the black-birch has been left to rot here in the bush. Perhaps you get a nice fine tree with a 30 ft. barrel. You cut off a length of the 30 ft. at a bend, and the 7 ft. below is as hollow as a drum right through. I have seen it myself in the bush that way. It is a timber that takes a lot out of the soil. It is very heavy, and people will not take the trouble to place it on the market. If there were the same energy in placing black-birch on the market as there is over other timber I am sure it would hold its own against any timber from Australia.

23. How do you account for the fact that the other is placed more cheaply on the market? Evidently the Australian timber is hard to cut. In your experience is it quite as hard to cut as ours?—When you cut a tree of this Australian timber down you notice very little waste. In black-birch you cannot cut it without waste. You cannot rely on it: that is really the point. There are some beautiful black-birch trees in Karamaea. In Marlborough they are not to be had, except on the high ranges, and it will not pay to get it.

HAROLD FRANKLIN HURSTHOUSE sworn and examined. (No. 37.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—Crown Lands Ranger for Marlborough. I have been stationed in this district sixteen months, and prior to that in Nelson, at Westport, and also in North Auckland in the kauri forests. I have had six or seven years' experience as a Crown Lands Ranger, and I have also been Timber Ranger.

2. Were you a timber-measurer in the Auckland District, and did you work out the contents when putting the timber up for sale?—Yes.

3. In your opinion is the Auckland system a more satisfactory one for dealing with the timber than just selling it on a rough estimate, as obtains in some other districts?—Yes, I think so, particularly as regards the kauri timber. In fact, for timber generally I think that is a better method from the Crown's point of view.

4. The bush is worked in a thorough manner, and there is not so much waste?—I do not think there is so much waste. The majority of the sawmillers clean their bushes up in a practical manner. Of course, some waste more than others.

5. My experience has been in some districts the miller will run a tram through, and some trees nice and straight he will take, but others a little off the line in a gully he will pass over and push on to his next reserve, and so on. Those trees are apt to be left, and a fire runs through them?—That is so; but the matter rests with the Ranger. Before he can pass on his first area must be cleaned up to the Ranger's satisfaction.

6. Is not the tendency to run through, particularly if there are orders being filled for white-pine?—Theoretically the Ranger has power to make them clean up; but in cases where there is dual control it is a difficult matter, and with the shortness of timber I am of the opinion that if all the timber were measured it would be the more satisfactory way. Also, there is now many a sum of royalty that is not collected.

7. Do you think a man standing on a hill and looking over miles of country can form any reliable estimate of the amount of timber in a bush without thoroughly going through it and examining it carefully?—I am satisfied it is impossible to give anything like an estimate. Any estimate given in that manner is not worth the paper it is written on.

8. Have you noticed any deer in this district?—I have noticed signs of a great number, but very rarely see them.

9. They are shy, I suppose?—Very shy; but they appear to come out on the green clearings as soon as it is dark.

10. In the daytime they are mostly in the bush?—That I doubt. I do not think they go far in the bush, but keep along the edges in the cleared country.

11. What signs of them have you seen?—The bush being eaten and tramped. The tops of all the spurs in my district are more or less like a cowyard, the main ranges particularly. Everything is trampled out. I have often looked for signs of what they eat, because I had my doubts as to what they did eat. The major portion of this country has not much undergrowth. In the birch bush particularly you can see for 10 or 15 chains ahead of you nothing but a few young birch-trees and a fern I call the puhī.

12. Did you notice any shrubs in particular eaten?—Only the bush called the karamu; but I noticed the mosses eaten along the edges, and certain kinds of fern.

13. Have you noticed any of the larger trees barked by deer?—No; but I have seen them barked by goats, many of them.

14. How can you tell it is done by goats and not by deer?—I have seen the goats at it. They seem to bark anything.