

39. Apart from prison labour have you any difficulty in obtaining free labour when you require it?—At times we have, but at others we can get plenty of labour.

40. Do the free labourers work on piecework or by contract?—On day-wages—8s. a day.

41. With regard to Puhipuhi Plantation, would you suggest that in future such land as that should be planted with forest-trees?—I think so, where the land is poor. But it is no use planting a 1,200-acre block in the centre of an area of 10,000 acres. Plant the whole area suitable, and open the rest for settlement as soon as possible, because if you have close settlement alongside the planted area you are the more likely to be keeping down the growth which would otherwise carry fire.

42. The Commission visited that plantation and found that a number of eucalypti which had been scorched by fire were sending out shoots from the bottom. Do you think those trees will come up again and prove fit for timber?—Yes. I would like to see the Department pursue an active planting policy there, or else abandon the place altogether, otherwise we are inviting a repetition of what happened from fire.

43. You are aware that outside the 1,200 acres reserved for planting the area has been subdivided for settlement?—No. Under those circumstances I would recommend the place being abandoned. 1,200 acres is not a sufficient area, and that particular area is very badly stocked with trees.

44. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Here is a specimen of timber from a *Eucalyptus* tree grown by Mr. Reynolds near Cambridge. It has been in the ground for twenty years and used for stock-yards. It is *Eucalyptus Macarthuri*. What do you think of it?—It should be a very valuable timber for the farmer.

45. What is your opinion of the *Robinia* for farming purposes?—We tried it, but it was not a great success. It is a good timber for the farmer, but the piece of *Eucalyptus* you have shown me would be far better.

46. *Mr. Clarke.*] With reference to future planting, are you giving special attention to growing trees for building-construction as against fencing and that kind of thing?—Our planting now is all for building-timbers.

47. What pines do you recommend should be planted?—The Douglas fir is the most valuable tree we can grow; for special purposes the *Pinus radiata*. I also recommend the *Pinus strobus* or Weymouth pine, the *ponderosa*, and the Corsican pine (*Laricio*).

48. Have you tried the Scotch pine at anything like a high altitude?—We tried it at Waitapu at about 1,200 ft.

49. In view of the considerable amount of high land we have in this Dominion is it desirable to experiment with other trees, such as the *Pinus sylvestris*, for the planting of such areas?—Certainly.

50. Are there any other American trees you recommend for the high rocky ground—the yellow-pine, for instance?—We have had difficulty in getting the seed. I would suggest the *Pinus palustris*, *Pinus taeda* (the loblolly pine), the *resinosa* (red-pine)—all very good trees—and also the *Lambertiana*.

51. If there is any difficulty in getting certain seeds is it not advisable to set apart an area to test the growing-properties in this country of, say, the yellow-pine?—If you cannot get the seed such trees are useless in regard to afforestation here.

52. Is it not possible to get the seed from anywhere?—That tree is grown only in America. The only American species you can buy in Europe is, I think, the *strobus*. You might also get a little redwood seed there, but not here.

53. Would you suggest starting a plantation for seed purposes later on?—We might try 100 acres for that purpose.

54. *Mr. Murdoch.*] Do you think the fire-breaks are reasonably safe at present?—Yes, with an additional constant supervision.

55. In the event of a heavy fire from any direction, could it be stopped before it reached the plantation?—It is very difficult to stop a fire in the crown of a tree—a flying fire.

56. I admit you can stop a ground fire if you have your men there in time, but do you think the present fire-breaks are protection against a fire in the leaves on the ground?—The present fire-breaks are naturally a help in stopping a ground fire.

57. Do you not think wider fire-breaks, supported by poplars, would be much safer?—I do.

58. In that case we would not be wasting the ground, because the poplar timber would be employed afterwards?—Yes.

59. Would it be safer?—I look on the present system of fire-breaks as valuable in this way: you can get about, and have a place to fight the fire from, if you keep them ploughed.

60. Besides you always have a road round the plantation?—Yes.

61. Would it not be much better for the Government to go to the extra expense of making breaks that would be reasonably safe than the present narrow breaks?—Well, instead of leaving them at 1½ chains as now, if we were to leave 1 chain, and plant 2 or 3 chains on each side of these breaks with deciduous trees like the poplar, that would certainly be of very great value in stopping a fire.

62. And a good insurance fund?—Undoubtedly.

63. In ordering seed would it not be better to obtain it as far as possible from pedigree trees, or the very best trees in any plantation?—That is the ideal state of affairs. We do that in the case of the *Pinus radiata*, and possibly some of the eucalypti, but I do not know of any tree we can get sufficient pedigree seed of.

64. In the light of experience would you continue to plant many of the trees now growing in the Government plantations?—I would not advise the planting of any more of the *austriaca*