

12. *Mr. Clarke.*] Were the five hundred head of deer shot for the purpose of preventing damage to the country, or to prevent the deterioration of the herd, Mr. McIntosh?—To maintain the standard of the herd. We have been told by visiting sportsmen that we have here the finest type of red deer in the world, and the finest herd, and so we wish to keep up our reputation by thinning the animals out.

13. Would that be considered sufficient by the settler who may be suffering damage from the incursions of the deer?—In that part of the country they do not do any damage to the settlers. They are in the wilds of the country, where there are no sheep even. At Morven Hills there are no complaints at all from the settlers.

14. *Mr. Murdoch.*] Do you consider those areas where there are no sheep even suitable for tree-planting?—I do not think so, on account of the snow and frosts.

15. In those districts where the deer are getting too numerous, and are damaging the farms and the State plantations, you consider it advisable that they should be shot off?—I do.

16. Would not that solution of the matter be enough for the settler?—They do not think so, but some even want to go in for poisoning.

17. *The Chairman.*] If they got permission to shoot them at any time when they trespassed on the farms might not they go into the mountains and shoot them?—We know they are shooting them all the time. We are anxious to acclimatize animals, birds, plants, or trees, and it is not to our interest to try and force anything detrimental on a settler, or that he is opposed to. We are anxious to meet him.

GABRIEL HODGES, President, and JAMES KNOX, Secretary, Otago Builders' Association, sworn and examined. (Nos. 8 and 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] I understand that you wish to make a statement to the Commission, Mr. Knox?—Yes. The executive of the Dunedin Builders' Association are convinced that afforestation is urgently required, and of vital importance to the prosperity of the Dominion. It is a well-known fact that the forests of both North and Middle Islands are being depleted at a rapid rate, and comparatively little afforestation is taking place. We are also of opinion that it is a matter of the utmost importance that the reafforestation of the lands should be carried on in a more vigorous manner than has obtained in the past; also that special consideration should be given to timbers suitable for building and other constructive purposes. Further, that large areas of land suitable for afforestation can be planted in this Island without in any way encroaching on land suitable for agricultural purposes.

2. Has your society gone into the question of what timbers they consider should be planted?—The pines we think would do—Corsican and yellow.

3. Has the *Pinus insignis* been used for building purposes in Dunedin?—It has been used for scantlings and weatherboards; also for joinery-work.

4. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] From trees grown in New Zealand?—From the imported timber.

5. *The Chairman.*] I refer to the locally grown timber?—I do not know of any *insignis* which has been cut down here and turned into timber.

6. Has the association considered the length of time the timbers they advocate should be planted would take to grow?—It would be a matter of from thirty to forty years.

7. What timber would be available after that time for sawmilling?—I have not gone into that question, but I suppose the Corsican pine would be ready in that time.

8. In the event of thinning-out taking place, what could the smaller trunks be used for?—For farm use, such as fencing; but not for posts.

9. Is any birch or beech used in the local market here?—No; we do not care for it. It has been tried; you can always buy it at 2s. less than any other timber, which indicates there is something wrong about it for building purposes. It warps and twists badly.

10. There are several kinds of these birches or beeches: which ones have you tried?—We call it here the red-birch. It is used for making chairs and furniture.

11. Does it warp if it is properly seasoned?—It requires a lot of watching.

12. Does it make good furniture if properly seasoned?—Yes, when properly seasoned it is a good timber for furniture. We are using it extensively now for that purpose, but outside that I do not think any one in Dunedin is using it. It is obtained from Southland.

13. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Have you had any from any other district?—Not that I know of.

14. Would it surprise you to know the red-birch does not grow in Southland?—It would surprise me.

15. *Mr. Clarke.*] Would you be less surprised if you were informed that the various kinds of birch are called all sorts of names in different districts?—No.

16. Assuming it is called "red-birch" here, is it fair to assume it would be called "red-birch" where you got it from?—Yes.

17. Do you consider you are responsible for the name?—No.

18. You are only concerned as builders with the value of the timber for your purpose?—Yes.

19. Would you consider it advisable to re-forest with that tree in preference to introducing foreign trees of proved value?—I would introduce the foreign trees, because the birches are useless.

20. Are the prices of timber still going up?—Yes.

21. Are there any lands near here, or within reasonable distance of this market, that could be planted?—The land at the back of the Flagstaff might be planted, and about Seacliff. It is handy to the railway and the city.

22. If timber is planted by the Government for commercial purposes you would not expect them to spend £500 in producing £400 worth of timber?—No.