

24. Do you find that they are not confined to the open country, but stray into the forests?—They live in the forests, but come down to feed in the lower country.

25. *Mr. Clarke.*] Do you not think it would be very much better to estimate exactly each sawmill area as it was applied for instead of going on the rule-of-thumb business you have described?—To do so would be very costly. A man would not do more than 2 acres a day, and in a block of 800 acres it would prove a heavy matter.

26. Would not the accurate results that would be obtained more than pay for the labour?—They might, but I would not like to offer an opinion on the subject, because I do not know how long it would take to estimate a given area.

27. *The Chairman.*] How long does it take you to arrive at the contents of a 200-acre block on the method you describe?—About three days.

28. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Have you ever heard the name “brown-birch” used in Otago?—No.

29. Or “white-birch”?—Yes.

30. Or “black-birch”?—Yes.

31. Or “red-birch”?—Yes.

32. Or “silver-birch”?—Yes.

33. Any other name relating to “birch”?—No.

34. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Are there any Maori reserves in your district near any forest?—Yes, in one place there is a considerable Native reserve, all bush.

35. Good timber?—About the average. There is a lot of kamahi.

35A. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Is kamahi milled at all here?—No; but it is used for mining-props.

36. Have you ever heard it called “birch”?—Yes, by the settlers about the mills.

JOHN ROBERTSON SCOTT sworn and examined. (No. 12.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Is there any statement you would like to make, Mr. Scott?—I am the secretary of the South Island Dairy Association, and as to the question of some other timber taking the place of white-pine for butter-boxes, I may say that years ago we tried white-birch out of the Waipori Forest, at Henley, and we made a fairly good case; but the wood proved brittle and very unsuitable. There is no timber as suitable as white-pine for cheese and butter boxes.

2. Locally is the white-pine used as cut, or do you paraffin the boxes?—They paraffin the boxes and line them with parchment paper to prevent the acid getting out of the wood.

3. In your opinion are there any other New Zealand timbers which, if so treated, would be suitable for butter-boxes?—I am afraid not. In our experiments we have found nothing else suitable.

4. From whom could we get the result of those experiments?—Mr. Cuddie, the Dairy Commissioner, might be the best man to go to. In Australia the butter-boxes are made almost exclusively of white-pine. The Canadian Commissioner in his report compliments New Zealand on its butter-boxes as landed in London, and says they are superior to the Canadian ones.

5. At what price are the white-pine boxes supplied here?—They cost about 1s. 8½d., and at one time we used to give 1s. for them.

6. Have you seen the imported boxes Mr. Moritzen is trying to put on the market now?—No, but I do not think any resinous timber would be any good for butter.

7. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] What are you going to do when the white-pine runs out?—That is the trouble. Year after year we have passed resolutions at our meetings, without effect, asking the Government to put an export duty on white-pine; but while we can get it we do not grudge the increased cost. With the drain on us from Australia the problem is becoming very serious indeed. The cost of the boxes has risen steadily, a portion of the increase being due to labour. But a jump in four years from 1s. to 1s. 8½d. is not wholly due to labour; in fact, the labouring-man is not getting it.

8. *The Chairman.*] Are you acquainted with the class of land the kahikatea timber grows on?—Yes; it is very good land indeed, but if neglected grows weeds very quickly.

9. If cultivated, would not that land produce a large quantity of butter-fat?—It is fine dairying country, all that Catlin's land.

10. Would it pay the Government to leave that land in kahikatea for a number of years, or turn it into cultivated land yielding butter-fat?—I think it would pay better to leave it in kahikatea timber.

11. You advocate the prohibition of the export of kahikatea?—Yes.

12. Would it not pay the country better to cultivate the land when the rents derived would return a greater revenue than keeping it in timber?—I admit all you say, but my trouble is, what are we going to do for timber in a few years' time?

13. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] What does Canada do?—They have plenty of timber, but their boxes are not as good as ours, and they have no export trade now.

14. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Has not Siberia?—Yes, but their butter has but a short distance to go compared with ours.

15. *Mr. Murdoch.*] Have you ever tried tawa?—No. I do not think it grows down here.

16. No, it only grows in the North Island, and I think it is the only substitute you could get here?—If so, I suggest that the Commission should get some boxes made and try it.

17. I suppose you are aware that in the working-up of the white-pine we only utilize 50 per cent. of it for butter-boxes?—I am aware of that.

18. Would it not be possible to use the off-cuts of this timber for butter-boxes?—You must have a uniform size.

19. Yes, but would it matter so long as you got the boxes how many boards they were composed of?—It would not make any difference, provided the joining was good, and you had the parchment lining and used the paraffin. That is only my opinion. I am not an expert.