

30. A combined Board would possess more knowledge than one man?—Yes. I believe the Board would not only have greater powers of administration, and therefore be more efficient, but it would stimulate public interest in this question. From inquiries I have made in the butter-factories I think the time has arrived when we should conserve the white-pine forests for the needs of the butter industry.

31. *The Chairman.*] You are probably aware that land where kahikatea grows is of a rich nature, suitable for dairying. If locked up for milling-timber the State might lose considerably in rentals more than it would get by way of royalty on the timber. Which would be the best course—to throw it open for settlement and take the rents, or keep it in timber and take the royalty?—I am not looking at the royalty or the rental, but at the known needs of an industry that requires this timber for butter-boxes.

32. Other countries, such as Canada and Siberia, utilize other timbers, paraffining the wood?—I assume the dairy people here cannot get other timber equally as good and cheap as the white-pine. If they can do so my suggestion falls to the ground. We shall not be able to draw supplies from America, as their forests are being depleted. Oregon pine is going up in price, and we only get the second class. It is estimated that in twenty to twenty-five years the yellow-pine forests will be cut out. Russia commenced planting two hundred and fifty years ago, and is now reaping the benefit.

33. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Do you think it advisable to grow timber at an apparent loss rather than not at all?—Yes.

34. *The Chairman.*] Have you any views as to the scenic reserves?—I am sorry to see what is going on now. Sale plans have passed through my hands recently covering thousands of acres of heavily timbered land, and not an acre has been set aside as a reserve.

35. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Can you point the places out?—I can submit some of the plans relating to Hawke's Bay, Auckland, and Southland.

36. Is it not possible there might be large scenic reserves in the neighbourhood of these blocks?—There is nothing to indicate them on the plans.

37. *Dr. Cockayne.*] You look on these reserves as natural museums as well?—I do.

38. Where all types of trees, plants, and insect life indigenous to our native forests should be preserved as samples?—Yes. I would also make reserves showing the character of all the plants and soils associated with the various forests, and containing specimens of the different native forest-trees. In Taranaki and in other parts the settlers have applied to the Government to buy some little scrap of forest that has escaped the settlers' fire.

39. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Do you not think these small reserves are very often a nursery for noxious weeds and rabbits?—I have seen blackberry on poor land and in open country.

40. I mean small areas?—I do not regard from 20 to 25 acres as a small reserve; it is big enough to be worth looking after. I have heard of cattle being turned into a scenic reserve.

41. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Where there was a rare plant such as the Chatham Island lily, would you stipulate that such places should be fenced off and declared sacred?—I would. I advocate the setting-aside of reserves for the preservation of the animal and bird life of this country. The time will come when people will not smile at these proposals, but a truly national sentiment in regard to them will be evoked.

42. *The Chairman.*] Do you know anything of the lasting properties of beech?—I saw a house at Otarama built of that wood. It was between twenty-five and thirty years old, and the timber was sound.

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JOHN HENRY MAYNARD SWORN and examined. (No. 19.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am the secretary of the Canterbury Builders and Contractors' Association. A committee of our association was appointed to consider the matter and submit to you any suggestions bearing on your inquiry. The following was resolved: Seeing that the Commission is constituted of such capable men, and that Dr. Cockayne and Mr. Adams are especially well conversant with all the conditions bearing on the subject as far as Canterbury is concerned, and knowing also that the builders' representative, Mr. Clarke, is one of the best authorities in the country as to the most suitable timbers to grow for building purposes, we have every confidence that the questions at issue are in good hands, and we are content to leave them there. I believe the suggestion emanated from this association that a Commission of this kind should be appointed, as we are of opinion something should be done in the direction of the inquiry at once.

2. You derive your supply of timber chiefly from Westland?—Yes.

3. Do you import any birch or beech?—Very little is used here. It is used in the country, and in the past I have used black-birch from Oxford and Alford Forests for building. It is used for bridges. *Pinus insignis* is used for farm buildings, and a quantity is cut at Barewood now. It is not fit for ordinary building purposes.

4. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Have you only known of black-birch?—I have known of red-birch, which is found on the West Coast.

5. Have you heard of white or silver birch?—Yes, but they are not reckoned good enough for building purposes.

6. *Mr. Adams.*] What has been the main objection to birch in Canterbury?—You must use it straight from the mill. That means using it in its green state, consequently there is considerable shrinkage. Buildings I erected twenty years ago in Ashburton of black-birch are in a good state of preservation now.

7. *Dr. Cockayne.*] With a shortage of timber in New Zealand I suppose black-birch would be better than nothing?—Considerably.