

thing different?—You have already the Taupo Totara Timber Co's line, which taps most of the Mokai district timber, apart from which the area to be served by this railway is comparatively small, unless it is proposed to go towards the western shore of the lake.

64. Do you consider that the construction of the railway would be justified?—I do not know that it would be, from a timber point of view.

65. *Mr. Samuel.*] That is purely from the timber point of view?—Yes.

66. In regard to getting the timber out, your opinion is that a line similar to that of the Taupo Totara Timber Co. would be sufficient for the haulage of the timber at Kaingaroa?—Yes, starting in ten years' time or more, unless there is meantime a good market for thinnings.

67. You suggest a line similar to that of the Taupo Totara Timber Co.?—Yes.

68. You know that the Taupo Totara Co's line is a railway?—Yes, there are some hundreds of miles in the district, including that of Ellis and Burnand, which I know well, and others near Taumarunui.

69. *Mr. Vaile.*] Do you consider that timber grows well in this area as compared with other areas?—Undoubtedly.

70. Is the planting there cheaper or dearer than in any other areas?—It is cheaper.

71. What is the quantity of thinnings now available?—I cannot tell you. I would have to refer to the Head Office for the information.

72. Is there a large or a small quantity?—There are fairly large quantities, over a very limited area, of course.

73. You say that there is no market for these thinnings?—There is a very limited market at the present time.

74. Do you think that there may be a market for fruit-cases?—The timber is still a little small for fruit-cases.

75. Battens?—The market would be immediately glutted.

76. Scantling and poles?—The best of it would give a small quantity of scantling, but only one or two pieces out of each log, and it would not yet warrant the handling. A great quantity is in the vicinity of 3 in. and 4 in. timber.

77. Poles and stockyard fencing-rails?—Yes; but there again the early plantations were planted at 4 ft. spacing, and the quantity taken off would be enormous.

78. Scaffolding?—Yes; but there again the quantity required on the market is small.

79. Fencing-droppers?—It would be fairly suitable for that service.

80. Mine-props?—Yes, there is a small quantity being used for that purpose now.

81. Firewood?—Yes, there is a small quantity. It is only from the Rotorua plantation.

82. And pulping eventually?—I hope so.

83. Do you say that the timber is unsaleable?—Yes, at the present time.

84. What efforts have been taken by the Department to dispose of it: have you advertised the timber?—No, but it is widely known that it is available there, and we make every effort to get rid of it. We made an effort recently to supply the bridge-scaffolding for two large bridges in the Waikato, but the cost of transport was too great, and supplies were obtainable on the river.

85. Have you ever sent round travellers to point out that the timber is available and to give quotations?—No.

86. If you have made no effort in those directions, how do you know that the timber cannot be sold?—There is no demand and no inquiry for that class of timber—or, at any rate, very little inquiry.

87. In private life we do not wait for people to rush us for our goods; we press them to buy: has the Department ever done that?—Not by advertising or by travelling as you have suggested, but we have distributed leaflets to interested parties, describing the methods of seasoning and the treatment to adopt in converting the timber into fencing-posts.

88. Have you supplied people with quotations?—As to the cost of the work, but not as to the cost of delivery.

89. Do you know the current price of totara rails—that is, 11 ft. rails, 6 by 4?—I do not know.

90. It is £20 per hundred: do you think that that is a reasonable price?—That would be a fairly excessive price.

91. What price do you think fencing-posts fetch?—Free on rail on the Main Trunk line and in the Rotorua district they bring up to £10.

92. You have large quantities of larch there?—Yes.

93. Are you aware of the qualities of that timber for fencing-rails and stockyard-rails?—So far there has not been an opportunity to try it out. It has not yet formed a great deal of heart. I cannot express an opinion on the matter, but probably other officers in the Department who follow me may be able to do so.

94. Do you think that the officers of the Department have been sufficiently interested in the disposal of this timber to look at the stockyards in the district built of larch?—I was not aware that any had been built of that timber, and I cannot say. I have been only eighteen months attached to the plantations in that region.

95. Would you be surprised to know that a larch rail is stronger and longer than and lasts as well as totara?—I would say that that is quite impossible.

96. Do you know of any telephone-poles made of that timber there?—Yes, saplings.

97. How long do they last?—Some of them last only three or four years. They are only saplings.

98. Do you know Mr. Butcher's telephone-line?—No.

99. Do you know how long it has been up?—No, but I do know that we have used immature larch in connection with our own telephones.