

1928 7,600,000 ft., an increase of over 100 per cent. I want to explain here that though these figures are right, in 1925-26 the imports were even bigger than that, but they were cedar. The bulk of it was cedar. There was 8,900,000 ft. of cedar imported last year, and 3,000,000 ft. of redwood. Since then the redwood has displaced the cedar on the market. The redwood has really put out the cedar. Redwood is the better wood, but I have quoted these figures to show how it is gaining on the totara, the local article. These figures show the trend of the market, and if Tongariro totara and matai are to be exploited in sufficient quantities to make the expensive access railway pay them, it is suggested that the timber will have to be supplied at a price which will compete with redwood and will have to be conditioned for the market in the same manner. It will take time to recover the business which has been lost to redwood, but it can be done, and if the foreign timbers, redwood and cedar, are displaced by totara and matai, then the proposed cut of 30 million feet per annum, 60 per cent. of which will be of these species, should not disturb the market to any appreciable extent. I do not know if that is clear. What I mean is that the proposal to cut 30 million feet of timber and put it on the market will not, if I might venture the opinion, disturb the market, because of that 30 million feet the amount of totara would be 28 per cent. and the amount of rimu would only be 25 per cent.—that is, from the estimate of the bush.

*Mr. Martin.*] That is your answer to the evidence given by Mr. Seed?—Well, I am only stating the facts.

*Captain Rushworth.*] How do you suggest that the totara would affect the market—by lowering the price?—I do not want to express an opinion, but I think that is fairly obvious. The business that has been lost through the substitution of steel for all window-frames and sashes in ferro-concrete buildings is not likely to be recovered at all. There is no export trade to be done in totara and matai. Only rimu, kahikatea, and beech are required in Australia, they having plentiful supplies of their own durable species. If 30 million feet were produced annually from Tongariro, it would mean—matai, 38 per cent., 11,500,000 ft.; totara, 28 per cent, 8,400,000 ft.; and rimu, 25 per cent., 7,500,000 ft.; balance, 9 per cent., other species, would have to be absorbed. It has been stated that the Tongariro Co. had “definite appraisals” made of the quantity of timber on the concession. As far as the State Forest Service is concerned, no real appraisal has been made. In each case a reconnaissance only was completed, and the quantities given are only estimated. To make a proper appraisal to secure definite quantities in species would necessitate the concession being divided into blocks and grids; the blocks carefully measured and the grids appraised to the extent of 10 per cent. of each. This operation would take many months for the 50,000 acres. The necessity for a correct appraisal is evident where one considers that 1,000 ft. per acre of error either way means, at 1s. per hundred stumpage, £25,000 to the owners, and an advance in stumpage of 1d. per hundred feet would, on the estimated quantity of 1,160 million feet, give £48,333 extra to the owners. Another thing I might mention here is that the redwood imported for the first seven months of this year exceeds previous annual importations; the importation of this timber is higher now than it ever was before.

*Mr. Waite.*] But not of redwood and cedar?—Cedar has practically gone back. But those importations of foreign timbers are higher now than they have ever been before. There is a point here that is interesting in connection with totara and matai production: In 1921, taking the 1921 production as 100 per cent., the production of the two species ran from 100 per cent. to 102, then it fell to 99, then came back to 103, 112, 115, and then fell to 99, and down to 88 in 1928. In the case of totara, taking the production as 100 per cent. in 1921, it rose to 111, 117, and then fell to 78, and then to 66 per cent. in 1928.

*Hon. Sir Apirana Ngata.*] It is being displaced by the imported timbers?—It certainly is. The same thing applies to matai. These two timbers have been gradually receding. That is just a statement of facts.

*Right Hon. Mr. Coates.*] Imagine that the Tongariro rights were working, should there not be a limit to the production?—Well, I think it will limit itself. I do not think that anybody, with that price, could put more timber on the market than the market could consume. It is a question of price. I was just discussing the question of cutting that 30 million feet proposed.

Supposing they produced 100 million feet per annum?—They would cut out the block more quickly; they would put more timber on the market.

Supposing they cut 60 million feet?—It would be too much to put on the market. Under their proposal they are intending to put out about 30 million feet. That cannot have much effect, because the timber that would be in competition with the rest of the Main Trunk mills is the rimu; and that applies to the rest of New Zealand—there are very few cutting totara.

*Hon. Sir Apirana Ngata.*] What about the mills in the Bay of Plenty?—There is no totara cut there; this block is about the only block that would produce totara.

What about the mills at Te Whaiti, towards Galatea?—Yes, there is totara there, but it is a long way away. It will be a long while before that will be available. It is a question of transport—the railage will kill it. This place certainly has an advantage over a lot of other places. If the railway were through, or even if a good road were through, it would make a difference.

*Right Hon. Mr. Coates.*] What do you estimate the total amount of timber in the Tongariro concessions at?—We cannot give any more than the estimate made by the three people who have been through there, but they were only there for about a month, and it is impossible to do it justice in that time. They only took sample lots here and there.

Do you think they have estimated it correctly?—Yes. They make it about 1,160 million feet. The first man made it on the log measurement, but that is an old-fashioned way of doing it.

*Mr. Grace:* Mr. Chairman, you are concerned about the work of the assessors. The original assessment was made by Mr. Sealy in 1905-6. He was two years on the job.

*Mr. Howard:* By whom was he employed?

*Mr. Grace:* By the company.