

would America and England sooner supply at a given price—Europe where the capital invested can be turned over a dozen times in the year, or our Dominion situated at the far end of the earth?

Were things at normal, and stocks carried in abundance by the manufacturers, we would of course suffer no disadvantage over Europe in price and supply, but for years to come after the declaration of peace, things are not going to be at normal. The manufacturers of building goods are going to be literally "snowed under" with orders and our chances of getting cheaper material and service in the Dominion are going to be in exact inverse ratio to the European demand. Again we reiterate that now is the time to build, for it may be many years before the present prices of material will be improved on.

As evidence of the confidence that is held in present prices and future business by keen business men we would call attention to such buildings erected during the war as the following either completed or in course of erection in Wellington alone. The Midland Hotel, the new Police headquarters, Messrs Clarkson's huge warehouse, the National Bank building in Cuba street, extension of the Peoples' Palace, a new Congregational Church in Cambridge Terrace, several Picture Theatres, three large motor garages, and many retail shops.

That does not look like want of confidence, and we commend the list to those who are feeling timorous with regard to building ventures. The cost will certainly be greater than pre-war figures, but the cost is going to be greater yet, and our firm conviction, backed by the correctness of our earlier predictions as to cost, is that the immediate "after the war builder" is going to pay the biggest cost of all. If so, why wait?

The Timber Supply and its Prospects

By S. I. Clarke

(Read before the Wellington Master Builders Association.)

This subject has for several years occupied the attention of our Federated Council, and it is not too much to say that good work has been done in connection therewith, but the matter is not receiving that attention from local and state authority which its importance demands. Accordingly, with the present price of building timber before our eyes, and the present difficulty of obtaining anything like adequate supplies of seasoned and reliable building and joinery material, no apology is needed for making this subject a special feature of the deliberations of our Federated Associations.

At the risk of being classed as either amiable faddists or troublesome alarmists, we must make continued and increasing demands on the attention of State authority and Corporate bodies, for a much more systematic and comprehensive policy in the matter of providing for a permanent and continuous supply of commercial timber.

That our New Zealand building timbers are rapidly disappearing there can be no manner of doubt, and that the natural supplies of what have been in the past, the great timber producing countries of the earth, are in the same perilous condition, is undeniable. The difficulty is to arouse public interest and activity in time to prevent very serious trouble, if not indeed disaster. An impending danger may be partly realized, but until the menace lays its hand upon us we are apt to allay our fear by the hope that in some way or other we shall escape, but from the fact that the pains and penalties are to some extent already upon us in the shape of increasing costs and diminishing supplies, it is not too much to hope for an early awakening of the people to a sense of the seriousness of the outlook as regards commercial timbers. A glance of the conditions as recorded in other parts of the world in this connection, will help us the more readily to understand how urgent is the need for action here; seeing that it will show how hopeless it is for us to expect relief, in the form of cheap, or even reasonably-priced timber from overseas, to say nothing of the foolishness of depending on foreign sources of supply of a material which can be readily and profitably produced at our own doors.

In the Report of the British Royal Commission on Coast Erosion and Afforestation 1909, page 9, we find the following:—

"In the case of timber imported to this country, the rise in price has been accompanied by a more or less marked reduction in quality, thus the actual increase in value, has been greater even than the figures indicate. Mr. Parry, engineer in chief to The Liverpool Waterworks, a large buyer of timber, finds that the cost has gone up in ten years fully 50 per cent. . . . Mr. Margerison, whose experience of the timber trade is widely recognised, thinks that during the past ten or twelve years a rise of about 50 per cent. is quite within the mark. . . . Mr. Miller, who has had extensive experience as a timber merchant in Canada, the United States, Scandinavia, and Russia, went so far as to say that in less than thirty years there will be no timber available, unless the different countries of the world set about



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