

87. Do you think the matter is sufficiently important to have representations made on the subject to the Federal Government?—Yes, if the Federal Government would take off the tariff it would help the beech-millers.

88. Would you suggest some system of reciprocity—remove the timber duties, or just request to have the timber duty removed so far as it affects birch?—That is so.

89. Do you know how the Federal tariff affects New Zealand timber? Has it been for the export of New Zealand timber, or has it kept the timber out?—The Federal tariff has certainly kept the beech out, because we have hundreds of acres of it, and we must find a market for it. The trade was a bit lively on the other side, but the tariff has killed it.

90. There is very little export?—Yes. I was doing a fair amount, and other millers also.

91. How far do you rail the timber from your mill?—Ashburton and sometimes Christchurch.

92. Have you any complaint to make against the present railway freights on timber; are you satisfied that they are fair and reasonable?—Yes. I would like to give a little more consideration to that matter. I could not answer that very well.

93. How far has the reduction recently made by the Government in railway rates affected your industry?—It has not affected it at all—it has not affected the Southland sawmillers to any extent.

94. Do you think you would be justified in coming to that conclusion, seeing that it is only a short time in operation?—Yes, it only affects the Christchurch market.

95. Does the consumer or the buyer benefit?—The buyer benefits. It does not matter one penny to the sawmiller what the reduction has been.

96. Do you supply dairy associations?—No.

97. Mining associations?—Occasionally.

98. To any extent?—Yes, a fair amount now and again.

99. What is your opinion as regards the wages paid to the men. Are they fair and reasonable?—Yes, they are good wages.

100. Are the hours reasonable?—Yes.

101. Can you say if there is any tendency to increase the prices?—No tendency at all.

102. Have you any knowledge of the timber-areas in Southland?—A fair knowledge.

103. How long do you think it will be before our pine and totara are cut out?—I would have to make a calculation.

104. Roughly speaking, how many years would elapse before the pine is worked out?—I would have to give that a little more thought.

105. Have you any knowledge of the bush in other parts of this country outside of Southland?—No.

106. Have you any knowledge of the plant and machinery in other mills?—Not outside of Southland.

107. Can you say if our machinery is up to date?—Yes, so far as Southland is concerned.

108. Do you not think that the tightness of money has something to do with the alleged trouble in the sawmills?—Undoubtedly it has something to do with the lessened sales. That is one of the items affected.

109. Do you not consider that the prices of timber are high?—No, when you consider the cost of production, and the cost in other places, they are not too high.

110. Will you produce your company's balance-sheet in a confidential way?—I do not mind.

111. Can you give us any particulars as to the award recently made in the case of the workers and the sawmillers?—No, you could get the report of that.

112. *Mr. Jennings.*] What is the output of your chief mill in the district?—One mill produces about 100,000 ft. per month.

113. With regard to royalties, they go to the Crown?—Yes.

114. Do you deal with Maori bush land at all?—No, we do not.

115. You say the Oregon pine has not affected you at all?—Not in Southland. It has in Dunedin.

116. Is there any connection between your association and the other associations throughout the Dominion?—No, none whatever.

117. You do not attribute the decrease to the stringency in the money-market. Are building operations as great here to-day as twelve months ago?—Oh, no! They have slackened off considerably. I should say they are one-third less, and more than 50 per cent. in other instances.

118. You say that the increased cost of timber is based to a very large extent on the payment of wages?—Yes.

119. Can you give us any information as to what was paid ten years ago as compared with to-day?—Not unless I look it up.

120. Will you kindly furnish it?—I will endeavour to do so.

121. *Mr. Field.*] I should be glad if you would look through this list [handing witness printed list] and say whether it is complete, or whether it includes too much—it was prepared by a well-known sawmiller up north, and the Commission wants to know whether it meets with your views as a practical man?—You mean the items?

122. Have you anything to add to it, or is there anything you think ought not to be there?—It is practically what I mentioned to you in the analysis. It is almost a similar statement to what I have given you. There is one thing that he has put in which I omitted to mention—he allows 33½ per cent. for loss in regard to the timber actually cut. Out of every 1,000 ft. of logs we only get 600 ft. of sawn timber. In other respects it is absolutely similar to my analysis. I do not think I have left out one of these headings.

123. You think that would be safe to go upon?—I do.

124. Is it all Crown land that you are milling upon?—All Crown land.