

307. Any others ?—Kaitangata.

308. And those mines need an annual supply ?—Yes, all coal-mines do.

309. All beech ?—Or some suitable timber.

310. And if the suitable timber is not obtainable in the district it would have to be imported ?—Yes. Sometimes they use blue-gum.

311. Is it not desirable to have some permanent supply of timber for the use of the mines ?—Well, there is nothing to prevent miners taking beech, matai, and red-pine. The coal-mines vary : one man will swear by beech and another will want pine.

312. What about getting it without having to import it ?—They can get it at ten days' notice.

313. How long will it take you to cut out your timber in the Longwood district ?—It would take us about six years for 800 acres.

314. Different mills ?—Different mills. Of course I could not tell you how long. I do not know the areas. I should say an 800-acre block at any mill would not last longer than six years.

315. So that we are within measureable distance of cutting out our timber ?—Yes, in the western beech district.

316. *Mr. Hanan.*] I should like to ask in regard to mills shut down. There are eight or nine closed now ?—Yes.

317. Recently ?—Some since December.

318. Where are they situated ?—On Longwood, Orepuki, Otatau, and other parts, and in Stewart Island, I think.

319. Can you give names ?—McCallum's, Glenburn. The other members can give their own mills. I do not know the names ; but I believe the Sawmilling Company has got one closed down.

320. What have been the main reasons for their having been shut down ?—The trade has fallen off—over-production.

321. Are any mills flourishing in the neighbourhood where these others have been shut down ?—No, no. All are in a struggling condition.

322. Is it on account of the class of timber they have been producing or unable to produce ?—It is on account of the hardships in getting timber, and the difficulty in selling when you get it.

323. When were these mills started that were shut down ?—Some had been in existence several years.

324. Can you say if the owners are in good positions financially.—Yes.

325. Are there any other mills in the neighbourhood working successfully ?—No ; the mills all work under reduced production.

326. Referring to the mills in the Longwood district cutting beech that are supposed to be affected seriously by the Federal tariff, are there any others closed ?—Yes, five altogether.

327. Are they larger mills ?—No, the same size.

328. Do you know the mills that the Commission visited yesterday ?—Yes.

329. Are there any mills close to these mills ?—Yes.

330. No larger mills ?—No ; all smaller adjoining those.

331. Do you know if they are complaining in respect to this beech, too ?—Yes ; all are complaining.

332. Can you say if it is the intention of the other mills to close down ?—Yes, I think some will close very shortly. Judging by what they say regarding orders, there are absolutely no orders to be had.

333. Taking things as they are in regard to the timber-supply, there is every probability of the price of timber being increased in the next five years ?—No probability at the present time.

334. How long will that obtain ?—I do not think there will be an increase for several years.

335. *Mr. Field.*] How many workers are employed in the sawmilling industry in Southland ?—About seven hundred—roughly, seven to eight hundred.

336. *Mr. Arnold.*] Following up that question, can you give us an idea of what is the aggregate amount of wages paid ?—About £7,000 a month : more than that—£7,000 to £7,500.

337. *Mr. Barber.*] Give us the number of mills in Southland District—associated mills, and those not connected with the association. These will practically absorb the whole milling area available in Southland ?—About seventy-odd in the district, and perhaps twenty in the association.

338. Considering that each will work out an area in six years, at the end of that time the milling will cease ?—No, because there is other bush available.

339. According to the returns on the table, these will absorb all the Crown lands available ?—No ; there are Crown lands in the vicinity not taken up.

340. There cannot be very much ?—Not very much ; but still there are areas.

341. If there are the number of mills, and each have 800 hundred acres, there will be practically nothing left ?—Yes.

342. So that in six years the timber industry in this district will not be a material consideration ?—No, it will not.

343. *Mr. Leyland.*] Do you think, as a national policy, it would be wise to prohibit the importation of Oregon pine in view of the fact that in six years we should have very little timber left ?—I should like to see what the Government would have to say.

344. In view of the fact that we are within measureable distance of exhausting our milling resources—as they will not last more than ten years—do you think it is wise to stop the importation of Oregon pine, from a national point of view ?—Of course, ten years is a good way to look ahead.

345. Do you not think it is wise to encourage it—to take the duty off altogether ?—No, I do not say that. You look upon it, I suppose, in the way that "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

346. *Mr. Jennings.*] Would you favour having timber from the North Island, where almost inexhaustible supplies exist, in preference to timber from another country ?—I should prefer to take it from the Dominion.