

Commerce Commission, it was shown by figures from 400-odd mills that the average cost of producing lumber was, I think, \$4.22. I think this is the exact figure: any way, it was something over \$4.

183. That will be per thousand?—That is about 1s. 9d. Do you mean putting it on truck?

184. I mean the cost of sawing?—That includes the timber and sawing.

185. No. In cases they pay \$9 for logs at the mills?—That includes royalty.

186. With reference to wages, you quoted from the *American Lumber Journal*, published in Chicago?—Yes.

187. They are competitors in our markets, and in other markets with the British Columbia people?—Of course they are.

188. The evidence they produce may be taken with a grain of salt as to the wages. This letter is dated the 20th January, 1909—the last mail before we left Auckland. That includes wages?—Yes. He goes on to say, “Quite a lot has been said about the low cost of labour in Canadian and American mills, but the following may interest your readers. Sawyers receive £1 0s. 10d. per day, and the wages per day run down to 10s. 5d. for all white men, with the exception of one or two labourers. Loggers supplying timber from the bush receive £1 0s. 10d. per day, and the head camp-men as much as £1 9s. 2d. and £1 13s. 4d. per day. Shingle-cutters are paid by piecework, and make 11s. 2d. per day and upwards. It is to be noted that the latter are Asiatics. In Canadian mills the majority of yardmen are Orientals, and you will find Chinese, Japs, and Hindoos working alongside each other. Their pay runs from 4s. 2d. to 6s. 3d. per day; but, then, they do not get through the same amount of work as white men. Let no person run away with the idea that the mills wish to employ Oriental labour: they are forced to do so. The question naturally arises, why are they employed in Canadian mills? The reason is simple. It all rests upon the unreliability of the white man. The miller wants white men, but when trade-conditions improve, and larger wages are available in the country districts, they will go out in a body and leave the mills without labour. It is, therefore, a matter of the mills choosing the lesser of two evils. They know it would be more to their advantage to employ white labour; but the white man will make use of the mill only so long as it suits him. The Asiatic, on the other hand, although not such a good worker—which fact necessitates about double the number being employed than in the case of his white friend—will stand by the mills in and out of season. I may say that our Chinese labour runs from \$1.35 up to as high as \$4 a day. We have no white labour in our employ at less than \$2.25, and our average wage-list is a fraction over \$30.” I also wrote and sent paper-cuttings to the gentleman who was President of the Board of Trade, Mr. William D. Wheelwright, a man who is respected on the whole of the Pacific Slope. He is President of the Pacific Export Lumber Company. He says, “It is true that a good many Japanese are employed in the British Columbia mills, but very few on this side of the line, and low wages, even for Orientals, is a thing of the past. In this country the price of available stumpage is generally \$2½ per M ft., and the cost of labour averages about \$3 per day for ten hours.” It was my privilege to meet a good many of these American lumbermen. I examined the wage-books, and found that to Orientals the wages paid were from \$4½ per day upwards, which is really about the same as stated in the letter quoted. But they would prefer to pay 10s. 5d. a day to white men. They found that they saved a considerable number of cents in the cost of labour thereby. Two white men would do as much work as four Orientals.

189. From the paper you quoted it would appear that there was a cargo of three million loading for New Zealand?—That is quite true.

190. That was not handled by Oriental labour: it was not carried on the bottom of subsidised steamers either?—No.

191. The hard woods imported here are imported for purposes for which our timbers are not very suitable. Do you not think it necessary to allow hard woods to come here?—Yes.

192. Are you aware that there has been an increase in the price of timber throughout the world?—Yes; I think timber, on the whole, has increased; but there has been a decrease in Oregon. That is exceptional. It has decreased very much in the Baltic.

193. Do you know the cost of Siberian timber delivered in the log in Australia?—I heard from a Melbourne timber-merchant who was over here a fortnight ago that it was 8s.

194. Do you know the quality of it?—It did not impress me very much.

195. You do not contemplate any serious competition, if it costs 8s. to Australia and it is inferior timber?—No.

196. You know the United States is a country that follows a high tariff?—I do, well; and I am aware that Oregon and Washington compete with British Columbia.

197. Do you know the duty imposed by the United States against British Columbia on sawn timber?—I saw that the other day. I have it in some of these journals.

198. Well, the duty is \$2 a thousand. We already impose a duty of £1. With reference to the larger trees, did you visit any of the forests they were working?—I did.

199. Did you notice that it was cutting on the face?—Yes, I did. I saw them cutting it on the face there. It was nearly all large timber.

200. They took it on the face there?—No; they left some of the small timber.

201. Did you notice the logs in the booms? They went down to very small logs, did they not?—No; in one bush I was in I do not think I saw anything there under about 2 ft. in diameter. On the Mississippi I saw them take logs down to 15 in. in diameter.

202. Would it surprise you to learn that in evidence given before the British Royal Commission, just published, by the United States Department of Agriculture it is stated that the annual consumption of timber is three or four times as great as the annual increment to their forests?—It would surprise me, because you must take into consideration the area of British Columbia.

203. I am speaking of the United States?—That still would surprise me, and I should doubt it.