

215. You mentioned that in laying down a siding the Railway Department will not allow you to remove your rails after you cease to have further use for the siding: is any use made by the Government of these sidings afterwards—do they become railways?—They probably use them. We had one at Orepuki, and they laughed at me when I asked for the rails. I suppose they used them for shunting purposes. Certainly, the rails would be worth lifting.

216. In view of the depression you stated that both public and private economies should be practised: would that not throw a lot of men out of work?—Not necessarily. I mean, when speaking privately, in the matter of luxury. Of course, a public policy of economy might throw men out of work.

217. Would that not increase the real depression of the country?—On the other hand, by borrowing money we might temporarily relieve the depression, but I do not think it would do any permanent good.

218. You advised from a national point of view the increase of duty on Oregon: are you sure that this would not lead to an increase in price in local timbers?—Quite certain of it—absolutely no chance of local timbers being increased.

219. Taking out the competition of Oregon, you say it would not tend to raise the price of local timber?—All the mills now are working shorthanded. There is too much competition amongst ourselves.

220. You advised the granting of larger areas up to 1,500 acres to a mill on the ground of utility: would it not be advisable to make one area, one management, and that the State?—That is socialism.

221. No. I am asking you the question following on your own lines—one area, one management, and that the State. Is that not the logical sequence of your own proposal?—It is a big question.

222. It is logical?—Yes, there is a certain amount of logic in it.

223. *Mr. Mander.*] Have you seen this list of the cost of production [handing it to the witness]?—Yes, I have seen that. Mr. Massey produced one somewhat similar.

224. Does that item include bank interest only, or interest on capital invested in the concern?—In our case it does not include interest on capital. Our profit, whatever we show, is profit of business without any interest on capital at all.

225. Would you suggest any reduction in railway freights as a means of reducing the price of timber?—I think so. I was a little disappointed in the last reduction. Anything that tends to reduce the cost of timber tends to increase the demand.

226. In estimating the quantity of timber a mill should have, do you not think it would be wiser to base the estimate on quantity rather than on area?—I do. I have always advocated that.

227. Are there not in some cases large areas of land with very little timber on it indeed?—Yes.

228. Consequently a man taking up 600 acres may only get half the quantity?—Yes. We say we want so much timber—we do not care about the land at all.

229. Do you find it more expensive to work scattered timber than timber lying close together? Yes, and in that way it hugely increases the cost.

230. A man holding a large area of scattered timber would find it more expensive?—Yes. I gave you an example of 2s. in the cost of production, and it is all that.

231. Do you find the increased interest on money has hampered you and put up the cost of production to any great extent?—It has put up the cost of the material a good deal, but it has not hampered the sawmillers to any great extent, because it is a cash business to a great extent, but it has no doubt increased the price of commodities.

232. You stated that your sawmills here were quite up to date with the rest of the Dominion?—Yes, the red-pine sawmills—I am not referring to the large kauri mills—they are in a different position.

233. Do you not think it would save a great deal of sawdust by having finer saws in your mills: not cutting so much with your large circulars?—I do not think the timber is large enough for gang-frames.

234. In some of our mills we have gang-frames in which you put the whole log through, and bring the timber out at the other end in the form of boards, and all that means that a great deal of saving is effected in the sawdust, instead of putting these twin circulars through the log and wasting a quarter of an inch in the cut?—Yes, but in recutting we have a smaller-gauge saw. We go down in gauge to three different grades, and in recutting we have a very fine gauge.

235. Do you find that the introduction of the Oregon into this colony has reduced the price of the timber to the builder?—I do not think so.

236. Do you think it likely that the timber-merchants dealing in other classes of timber will allow the price of Oregon to reduce the price of timbers in New Zealand by the competition?—I do not think they have a say in the matter. Oregon can be imported by any one. It has been imported by those who have nothing to do with timber. Mr. Stead brought a shipment to Christchurch, and he had nothing to do with timber.

237. Do you find that you get the same results from your workmen now that you did fifteen or twenty years ago per hour: do they throw the same energy into their work?—They complain that the work is harder and the bush is harder to work at the present, and I have no doubt it is.

238. Do you find the workmen give the same results per hour as they used to?—No, I do not think they do.

239. That would be an additional cost?—Yes. I gave similar evidence to that before the Arbitration Court not long ago. We have some very good men, but, taking it all through, it takes more men now to produce a similar quantity of timber than it did some years ago. I have no doubt the timber is harder to work.