

INVERCARGILL, TUESDAY, 30TH MARCH, 1909.

CHARLES ALBERT PIPER sworn and examined. (No. 10.)

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What are you?—I am Traffic Manager of the railways in Invercargill.

2. Will you just give to the Commission a statement as to the traffic in timber, the railage according to distances from the bush to here and from here to the distributors?—To give you a statement of the various charges from all stations now would cover pages, but I could have a printed statement produced.

3. *Mr. Leyland.*] What are your minimum charges for certain distances, and your charges for certain distances above that?—I will read out the charges, say, for the first ten miles, and every ten miles after that. White-pine is charged one rate, then red-pine, and then Oregon pine is charged at rate and a half.

4. *Mr. Barber.*] What about totara and matai?—That is taken the same as red-pine. Well, ordinary rates for timber up to 10 miles is 8d. (one mile would count the same as eight); for 20 miles, 1s. 4d.; 30 miles, 1s. 8d.; 40 miles, 1s. 11d.; 50 miles, 2s. 2d.; 60 miles, 2s. 6d.; 70 miles, 2s. 9d.; 80 miles, 3s.; 90 miles, 3s. 1d.; and 100 miles, 3s. 2d.: and now you can take it for 20 miles after that—120 miles, 3s. 5d.; 140 miles, 3s. 7d.; 155 miles, 3s. 8d.: and it was after 155 miles that the last reduction was made, in January. Now, from 155 miles the rate is taken in groups of five miles. In fact, it is practically taken in groups of ten miles. These rates are made up in the Head Office: 155 miles, 3s. 8d.; 165 miles, 3s. 9d.; 175 miles, 3s. 10d.; 185 miles, 3s. 11d.; and so on right up to 400 miles. Now, those are the ordinary mileage rates for ordinary timber.

5. That also applies to logs as well as sawn timber?—Yes. Of course, we have no log traffic down here. These are the ordinary rates for mileage so far as this part of the railway is concerned, less the reductions which were made to the Southland mills on timber to Dunedin and beyond.

6. *Mr. EU.*] You said there was a difference in white-pine?—The charges I have given are for the ordinary timber.

7. They are general?—Yes. I will take white-pine separately. Those rates which I have given you are subject to a reduction as follows: We had, I might explain, an old rate up to December, in which timber from the sawmills in Southland consigned to Kensington or Dunedin was charged 1s. less, and stations between Pelichet Bay and Orari 9d. That regulation has been altered, and the sliding scale has been made to keep it in uniformity with the new rates.

8. *Mr. Jennings.*] When was that alteration made?—At the beginning of January. Now, those reductions, I might explain, only apply to sawmills in Southland sending timber to Dunedin and north; the same distance going anywhere else would be subject to the ordinary rates. Timber from sawmills in Southland consigned to Kensington and Dunedin will be charged 1s. per hundred superficial feet less than the classified rates, and the further reduction for distances beyond Dunedin is as follows: Not exceeding 160 miles, 9d.; 220 miles, 8d.; 230 miles, 7d.; 235 miles, 6d.; 240 miles, 5d.; 250 miles, 4d.; 255 miles, 3d.; 260 miles, 2d.; and 270 miles, 1d. Then the reduction exhausts itself, and you come back to the original rate.

9. *Mr. Leyland.*] There was a sliding scale in January?—Yes.

10. And that applied generally?—Yes.

11. And are those rates less than that?—Those are reductions which are to apply to all timber consigned to Dunedin and stations north of Dunedin from Southland only.

12. Do you know if there is any similar arrangement in Waikato?—I cannot tell you that offhand—it will be in the regulations. I should say, speaking without the book, that there are local rates.

13. *Mr. Jennings.*] Do you have differential railway rates existing throughout the Dominion?—Yes. These reductions here are entirely on account of water competition.

14. *Mr. Hanan.*] The difference in the railage to Dunedin and Mosgiel is on account of the water competition?—Yes. If our rates were 5s., and the steamer would take the timber for 3s., we should have to cut into that.

15. Take Invercargill to the Bluff?—The same thing.

16. *Mr. Arnold.*] What station do you term "north of Dunedin"?—You start at Pelichet Bay.

17. But Pelichet Bay is in Dunedin?—It is not in Dunedin so far as we are concerned—you must make a start somewhere. Well, that is really all there is to be said so far as the ordinary rates are concerned, and so far as the reduction is concerned to the stations starting from Dunedin north. Now, with regard to white-pine, the rates are 8d. per 100 ft. up to 20 miles; 22 miles, 9d.; 24 miles, 10d.; 26 miles, 11d.; 28 miles, 1s.; and then, up to 32 miles, 1s. 1d.; 38 miles, 1s. 2d.; 44 miles, 1s. 3d.; 50 miles, 1s. 4d.; 56 miles, 1s. 5d.; 62 miles, 1s. 6d.; 68 miles, 1s. 7d.; 74 miles, 1s. 8d.; 80 miles, 1s. 9d.; and after that it is 1d. per hundred feet per mile up to 180 miles, and beyond 180 miles it is $\frac{1}{10}$ d. per mile. That is to say, you go ten miles for 1d. The difference in the rates between red and white pine, taking 25 miles, is as follows: 25 miles—red-pine 1s. 6d., white-pine 11d.; 50 miles—red-pine 2s. 2d., white-pine 1s. 4d.; 70 miles—red-pine 2s. 9d., white-pine 1s. 8d.; 110 miles—red-pine 3s. 3d., white-pine 2s. 2d.; 180 miles—red-pine 3s. 11d., white-pine 3s. 2d.; 300 miles—red-pine 4s. 11d., white-pine 4s. 2d.; 400 miles—red-pine 5s. 9d., white-pine 5s. The rates on red-pine are subject to the reduction