

111. You assume, if we could sell Oregon at 11s., that it would interfere with red-pine. Do you know any one who can afford to retail Oregon at 11s. if it costs 11s. 9d. in the yard at Dunedin?—No, I should think not.

112. We had evidence this morning that only 15,000 ft. of Oregon has come into Southland and Invercargill. Do you think our mills here are in much danger from that?—That must be a mistake. I bought ten or twelve thousand myself, and I am in a very small way.

113. What royalty do you pay on rimu?—Sixpence.

114. If you bought 4,000,000 ft. of rimu you would give the Government £1,000?—Yes.

115. If you imported 1,000,000 ft. of Oregon you would give the Government £1,000?—Yes.

116. As a matter of fact, so far as the Government is concerned, they give nothing in return for the 2s. duty?—That is so.

117. *Mr. Clark.*] With regard to the building of a four-roomed cottage, are we not in the centre of the town?—Yes.

118. How many four-roomed cottages are there within eye-shot of this place?—None at all.

119. What proportion would you assume that the standard four-roomed cottage has in regard to the whole value of the building industry of a city?—There are always a few going up, especially in the suburbs.

120. But it would be a very small proportion?—I should think it would be.

121. In that case, to quote everlastingly a difference of £7 10s. per room in the cost of a four-roomed cottage does not convey any adequate idea of the rise in value of building-materials in a city as a whole, but only in regard to four-roomed cottages?—That is so, so I took a seven-roomed house as an instance; I gave my evidence on the basis of a seven-roomed house.

122. With regard to the increased cost of production owing to the burden of the recent laws and regulations—with regard to the Arbitration Act, you stated that it was one of the causes of the increase?—Yes.

123. Do you not think that of necessity that extra cost must fall on the consumer? As a citizen, in the sense of what the public has to pay, is there not enough burden already imposed on the public by the operation of these laws without further burdening them by increasing the Customs duties?—That is more a question for a politician than a sawmiller.

124. With regard to the cost of production here, you spoke of it being increased owing to the continually receding sites of the sawmills. Is it practical wisdom to put a sawmill in an impossible situation and expect it to pay the increased price?—Some of the mills were placed near the bush when they started, and the timber has shifted back—in some instances, four or five miles.

125. In an enterprise of that kind do you not expect your returns to be a little decreased as against a more favourable situation?—That is so.

126. With regard to importation and the constant question of the money going out of the country, is it not a fact that it is only a changing of values?—That is so.

127. Whenever we get 17,000,000 ft. of Oregon do we not get value added to the country?—As a political economist you can reason that very nicely. If you were a working-man out of employment in the country you might argue from a different standpoint.

128. Is it not a fact that the labour on the timber has only just commenced when it arrives here—the finished product as against the raw material? What is the economic value of a stock without conversion, if left there?—As a matter of fact, I would say that the bulk of the labour had been done when it reached here; the bulk is in the bush when cutting and getting logs to the mill.

129. I mean with regard to its ultimate value to the Dominion—to the consumers of timber? A stick of timber on this wharf if left to remain there—would it have any value at all? Would it not be an encumbrance?—You are assuming a log laying there. I cannot agree with you.

130. *Mr. Morris.*] Did you say that one of those contractors cutting on 1s. 9d. per hundred feet twenty-six years ago was able to pay his way?—The time I refer to it was cut under three different contracts—the bush, the mill, and the yard, and they made a do of it.

131. I would like to get your opinion on the area allowed for mills under our present regulations: are they sufficient or too small?—That is another question that cannot be answered Yes or No. They are all right in certain places. Where the bush is good I would say 800 acres is enough for a sawmill, but where you get two, three, or four thousand feet to the acre, the area may not be half so valuable.

132. Assuming 10,000 ft. to the acre, that would be 8,000,000 ft. of timber?—Yes.

133. Do you think that is sufficient to warrant a man in erecting a mill at 1s. per hundred feet?—No, I would say in my case that 3s. would not be enough.

134. You stated you were a Free-trader by conviction, but think that the Government should protect our local industries?—I said I thought I could not be charged with very much inconsistency if I asked the Government to impose a tax.

135. You think we should look after ourselves before the Americans?—I think it is human nature.

136. We were told yesterday that it is the practice here of men in the association to buy timber from mills outside the association in order to cut down competition so that the prices may not be interfered with?—Some do buy from those outsiders.

137. Do you buy any yourself?—I do not think I do myself. Of course, I am only a very small potato. If they do, it is because it is the best thing they can do with the timber. It is not so much the big running after the small, as the small running after the big.

138. The impression was that the big bought from the little to prevent them from competing?—That is not right.

139. The price is not due in any shape to the association?—I said that that certainly was part of the reason for the association being formed; the prices were so low—they were only starvation prices.

140. And you cannot control these small mills outside of the association?—Not at all,