

3½ in places, and after looking round we found we could get a grade of 1 in 6, and we shifted the mill about a mile and a half, and we have now a grade of 1 in 6½. To do that we had to do a great deal of excavating, and had four men continually on the tramway. We have gone pretty well a mile up now, and are still a quarter of a mile from the summit. We work it with six horses, and I am afraid we shall have to put on more before we accomplish what we want to do. Then there is a down grade on the other side.

17. In your opinion then, it does not pay to invest money in the sawmilling industry at the present time?—Not in broken country. It cost us £600 to move the mill from one site to another, we had to construct two bridges which cost £200 each, and put up a stronger hauler to work difficult bush.

18. You have been a long time in the timber industry?—Yes, sawmilling for four years.

19. You know something about the Seaward Bush district?—Yes.

20. What are the conditions there in the way of settlement?—I have not been there for years.

21. Have forest-fires occurred there?—Yes, a severe one about two years ago.

22. Do you find that the building trade is falling off here?—Very much so. In fact, two years ago it was not a question of selling timber but rather a question of getting timber to sell.

23. *Mr. Field.*] Is the present depression in the building trade in any way due to the increased price of timber?—No. If money was plentiful the building would proceed.

24. Do you think the price charged now is too great?—Not under the present conditions.

25. Have many millers in this part of the Dominion made money?—Yes, a few in the early days.

26. How many are piling up money now?—I could not tell you of any one.

27. Do you think they are paying handsomely?—I do not.

28. We had it in evidence that only two men made money in this part of the Dominion out of sawmilling since it began?—Two get credit for having made money; others have come to grief. I am in business otherwise than milling, and I know sawmillers who have been in business during the last ten years who still pay their accounts by promissory notes.

29. About Oregon?—I am in favour of the present duty being retained. I am quite indifferent whether it is increased or not—sawmilling is a side line with us.

30. What would be your opinion if it were shown that it was going to compete successfully with our rimu?—It would be a bad thing for sawmillers and workers generally.

31. Have you got any opinion as to the conservation of timber lands for future generations?—I think the Government should go in for afforestation.

32. You think we should use our own timber for our own purpose?—I think we should. It will go in time, and a few years do not make much difference one way or the other.

33. Do you think it would be fair to ask private owners to hang up their timber for an unlimited time?—It would not be fair.

34. If it is to be conserved at all it should be done by the State?—Yes, they are the proper people.

35. You know nothing about the conditions prevailing in Wellington?—No.

36. You know something about sawmilling: supposing a price-list was shown to you which showed that ordinary rimu was purchasable in Wellington at 14s. 6d., what would you think?—I do not know what railage they have to pay on it in Wellington. Rents and such other expenses are very stiff there.

37. Do you think that would be an unreasonable price?—I should say that they are doing better than we are here.

38. *Mr. Leyland.*] In giving us your estimate of 2s. 2d. as the cost per hundred feet, I do not notice that you make any allowance for the waste in measuring it. We find in handling timber that we have never yet been able to measure it out at less than 5 per cent. loss on the quantity charged?—We do not check the mill's tally.

39. Because it is your own mill?—Yes.

40. If from another timber-merchant's yard?—Yes.

41. I do not see any provision for bad debts either?—No.

42. That estimate of yours should have some more added on to it?—Yes.

43. Do you make any bad debts?—Rather.

44. I do not notice any provision for depreciation, horses, harness, and all these things?—I put down £1 per week for these things.

45. I do not notice any item for interest on stocks?—No, I let that go.

46. If it could be shown to you that Oregon was not likely to increase, or to affect local timber very seriously, do you think it would be wise to put on an extra duty under those circumstances?—No.

47. *Mr. Clarke.*] Do you belong to the Sawmillers' Association?—Yes.

48. Is it a fact that supplies can be obtained from sawmillers who are not members equally rapidly with those who are members, or are there difficulties?—The timber-merchants mostly deal with the unassociated millers.

49. Are there not a good many who have no planing-machine, but simply cut rough timber?—Not many now—a few small millers.

50. In that case they would only be able to supply a limited order?—Yes.

51. Is it not a fact that one, of that class of sawmillers uses a traction-engine on his own bush?—That is correct. There is a miller doing that, cutting white-pine.

52. In that case the outside millers are those doing a small line of business?—A number of them; some of the outside millers are in a fairly large way.

53. *Mr. Morris.*] Does your association here fix the selling-price of timber?—Yes.

54. You are not able to control those small millers outside the association as to the price at which they sell?—No.