

3. *Mr. Field.*] Does some of this timber come in by some of the smaller boats to the wharf?—Quite possibly. Small boats tranship it from Dunedin. They might bring timber down that we should know nothing at all about.

4. And land it at the wharf here?—Yes. Of course, that might be entered in the Customs returns in Dunedin or here, but so far as the imports to the Bluff are concerned, the Customs returns would be far more reliable than ours. There is another matter that I did not make quite plain with regard to the reductions in the freight on ordinary timber from the Southland mills to Dunedin and North. The regulation states that 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 timber from sawmills in Southland consigned to stations north of Dunedin is charged the rates I have already mentioned.

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DUNEDIN, THURSDAY, 1ST APRIL, 1909.

T. SCOTT sworn and examined. (No. 21.)

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What are you?—I am a venetian-blind and revolving-shutter manufacturer.

2. You are asked here to give evidence on some of the points that were submitted to us for consideration?—My principal reason for asking to be heard is on account of the anomalies in the present tariff upon imported stuff. The bulk of the timber in connection with my trade is imported, as none of the colonial timbers are suitable for this class of work. The anomaly that I principally want to bring under the notice of the Commission is the difference, the very slight difference, if any, in the timber in the bulk and timber manufactured. I can show it to you by these few pieces that I have brought with me. The duty on rough sawn timber is 2s. per hundred feet, and the duty on dressed timber is 4s. per hundred feet, no matter what size—that is, per hundred superficial feet. Here is a case in point where you have six surface feet for one superficial foot. That is, for every hundred superficial feet of dressed timber, as the tariff interprets it, you have six times that, and there is no extra duty on it. As a matter of fact, there are several plants in New Zealand and in all big towns for the manufacture of this stuff, and with one exception they are all abandoned and standing idle, because they are getting this timber over from Sydney, and getting it in at 4s. per hundred superficial feet. As a matter of fact, in importing it from Sydney already dressed you save 1s. 3d. in freight and 1s. 3d. in duty. One-third of this timber goes to sawdust in the process of manufacture. That is the reason why the importation has taken place. The work is all done in Sydney.

3. *Mr. Arnold.*] How long has that duty been on?—As long as ever I can recollect. It is only lately that it has interfered to such an extent, as previously the stuff was manufactured in New Zealand. If you go to places in Christchurch, Wellington, and I believe in Auckland you will find the plants that they formerly used lying idle.

4. Your point is that if the duty were altered it would encourage the local manufacturers?—The duty on bulk timber—that is, on large sizes—is 2s. per hundred feet, and that is quite sufficient, but no matter how small the timber is cut up outside the colony the duty is still the same. The duty should be on the face surface or at a higher rate.

5. Is there any New Zealand timber that could be used in your business?—None whatever. It has all been tried and abandoned.

6. Why is that?—Because it has to stand a large amount of sun-heat in the window, and New Zealand timbers warp far too much. That has been the difficulty so far. For certain classes of work there is no New Zealand timber suitable.

7. *Mr. Hanan.*] Do you use much Oregon in your business?—None at all.

8. As a finishing-timber does Californian red-pine come into much competition with New Zealand timbers?—No. The price is too high. The lowest landed here is something like £1 3s. per hundred.

9. Speaking of the cost and sale prices of venetian-blinds in your business, have the prices increased during the last seven or eight years?—No; they are still the same as they were eight years ago.

10. As to the cost of material?—That has increased in cost. The timber alone has increased 25 per cent., although still imported.

11. With regard to the cost of labour?—That has increased, but I do not think it would make a difference of more than 10 per cent.

12. Do you think it is desirable that all hard timbers should come into this country free?—I may say that we use a certain amount of kauri for the thick part of the blinds, but the price of kauri now is prohibitive, and it is absolutely necessary that you should import some timber to replace it. The last quotation was £1 12s. per hundred feet, less the usual discount to the trade, which is 10 per cent. and 2½ per cent. That price is simply prohibitive.

13. Have you any views with regard to placing duty on Oregon timber?—I think it would be a mistake to place a duty on any imported timber. It would be an undoubted mistake. In fact, my own impression is that it would pay us handsomely to place an export duty on kauri.

14. Do you find much difficulty in getting good red-pine here?—We do not use it. It is unsuitable for our class of work.

15. *Mr. Jennings.*] Are there many men employed in your industry?—At present there are not a great many. I suppose thirty altogether in the town.