

75. *Mr. Leyland.*] Do you recut and match timber here in Dunedin?—Yes.

76. Can you in recutting take three $\frac{3}{8}$ in. boards out of 2 in.?—Not very well. We take two out of $1\frac{1}{2}$ in.

77. You have to go to the cost of cutting?—Certainly.

78. It will take you as long to plane, tongue, and groove a five-eighths board as it would an inch?—Yes, just as long.

79. You differentiate in the charges?—Yes, of course. We charge less for half-inch, and proportionately increase the charges on five-eighths, three-quarters, and an inch. I think we have met the trade in that respect.

80. I think you stated that you are not in favour of increasing the duty on Oregon, but you have stated that possibly it might be wise to increase the duty, or keep the duty on the small sizes if the duty was taken off the larger sizes?—Yes, for our own interests.

81. As regards large sizes, what would you call large? If there was a demand for joists would you include at 12 by 2 in the large size?—No, I would take from 10 by 10 upwards.

82. Is it not a fact that in getting a quotation from America for Oregon you are quoted on the basis of the "E" list?—Yes.

83. If you take long lengths you increase your costs?—Yes.

84. You already put a duty on by altering your specifications—in effect, you increase the cost?—You increase the cost under the "E" list in certain cases, but if you come to the 12 in. width you do not increase your cost under the "E" list very materially.

85. You are going to put extra duty on those?—Yes.

86. It would not be a fair thing to compel an importer to import only large sizes unless you assisted him by removing the duty?—Yes, that is so.

87. *Mr. Clarke.*] You said that Oregon was required as a timber to supply a deficiency in our own timbers?—I said that we were importing Oregon here as against kauri. We can use it in our factories for many things in place of kauri.

88. Has not the agitation for increased duty on Oregon been something like an agitation in one province as against another?—Yes.

89. One question with regard to the Sawmillers' Association: Assuming one of your fellow-citizens decided to start to sell timber and he determined to sell under these list prices, would he have a chance of getting reasonable supplies from the Southland mills?—Oh, yes! If one did so, the rest would follow suit the next day.

90. You say that any one could do so?—That is so.

91. With regard to the question of former prices in Invercargill, I think you stated that timber had never been sold there at 3s. 9d.: now, if receipted bills and invoices were produced before this Commission showing that timber was sold at that price, would that not modify your opinion?—I should be surprised to see it, because I have never heard of timber being under 5s.

92. *Mr. Morris.*] Do you know of any proposed buildings in Dunedin being kept back owing to the high price of timber charged here?—No. I have spoken to one or two of our principal architects lately on this subject, and they assured me that even if it were possible to reduce the price of timber by 2s. 6d. or 3s. a hundred it would not make any difference whatever to the volume of the building trade.

93. We have been told to-day that builders often experience great difficulty in obtaining their supplies from the local mills?—Not from the local mills. They may find a difficulty in getting it from Southland. Southland sawmillers now make this their principal market. They have their own agents and travellers seeking orders. The contractors send all their orders direct to the Southland mills, and possibly they have a difficulty in getting supplies; but if they had to treat with the people here, they would have no difficulty in getting their supplies straight away.

94. You tell us you had to reduce your price to compete with the millers who were not in your association?—No, we had to reduce our tender rates here to compete with the Southland Association.

95. I understand they are part and parcel of yourselves?—We could not get the prices laid down by them, and we had to bring our prices down to the rates that the Southland people were supplying for.

96. Your association cannot be accused of fleecing the public by charging prohibitive prices for timber?—If you take the different costs and the charges we have in handling the stuff, and the price we sell at, you would see that there is a very small margin left.

97. What would be the price of resawing Oregon here if it came in in the junk free?—I would put it down at 1s. a hundred, as I think it would cost that with handling.

98. If the duty was taken off junk stuff, I presume you would resaw the whole of your requirements?—Possibly. I think it would pay if junks were brought in free—that is, it would pay us to resaw it into small stuff.

99. Having in view the fact that there is a great deal of capital invested in sawmilling in this country, that it is a large source of revenue in the way of freights on our railways, and both directly and indirectly employs a large amount of labour, do you think, looking at it from a colonial standpoint, that it would be wise to admit foreign timbers into New Zealand free and thereby close our great native timber industry?—No, I do not think it would.

100. *Mr. Barber.*] Where do you get your timber from?—We get it from different places—Stewart Island, Waikawa, Tautuku, Southland.

101. You said just now you had to reduce your prices?—The principal amount of timber that I take into my yard is purchased outside from numbers of mills.

102. You purchase from a number of Southland millers?—No. I purchase from Waikawa, Stewart Island, &c. They are outside mills, and I thereby get water carriage, which is much cheaper than rail.