

103. What harbour dues do you pay?—We pay 3d.; there is no pilotage.

104. What is the freight from Stewart Island?—Two shillings; it is the same as from Waikawa.

105. With regard to the Baltic which you sold cheap, what price did you get for it?—We sold very little of it. We used practically all of it in the factory.

106. I think you said you reduced the price?—Yes, we reduced it 15 per cent. The price at one time was £1 17s. 6d.

107. What do you pay for timber at Stewart Island?—For the rough timber 6s. 6d.—that is, f.o.b. You have to add to that 2s. freight, 3d. dues, 2d. handling, 1d. measuring, and 4d. into the yard for cartage.

108. These mills are able to produce the timber and put it free on board for 6s. 6d.?—Yes, but you must take into consideration that we take all their output.

109. You classify it when you get it?—I should explain here that the 6s. 6d. rate is a low rate. It is really the basis, because we pay more for the finer and cleaner timbers. These cost us 7s. 6d., not necessarily heart, but good clean timber.

110. You say there has been no rise in the price of timber for the last twenty years, or, rather, you said there was not a very great rise?—In 1900 you will find it was 10s. less 5 per cent. To-day we are sending it out of our yard at 11s. 5d.

111. When it was mentioned that timber was being sold twenty years ago at 3s. 9d., you questioned the truth of that witness's evidence?—I cannot conceive it even now. It never came down here in a corresponding way.

112. You said that you were in Invercargil twenty years ago?—Yes.

113. Do you think your knowledge is sufficient to justify you in making a statement in direct contradiction to the evidence tendered by Mr. Bain on oath?—I said it must have been second- or third-class timber.

114. Are you aware that a report on the timber industry was prepared by Professor Kirk twenty years ago. He is an unbiassed man, who went into the thing very thoroughly and fully, and in that report he bears out exactly the evidence of Mr. Bain. He says, "First-class rimu for building purposes is now loaded in the railway-trucks at 4s. per hundred superficial feet. This can only be done under thoroughly systematic management. The average yield of timber per acre varies considerably in different districts. Good virgin forest in Southland yields over 20,000 ft." That is in Southland?—That is a thing that I cannot understand, nor can I answer it.

115. Well, do you think what Professor Kirk states is reliable?—I have never given it a thought.

116. I do not want you to depreciate the evidence given by Mr. Bain and now confirmed by Professor Kirk. Now, with regard to the price of red-pine—I mean first-class red-pine, not second-class?—The price is 10s. 6d. for first-class red-pine in the yard. That is the cost of it.

117. It can be loaded at that?—It cannot be sold at that. It is the selling-price that you were asking me about. That is merely the cost of loading.

118. *Mr. Hanan.*] Now, what do you say regarding that bill?—On these invoices here, it is the first time that I saw such prices. It is mentioned from 3s. 9d., and red-pine scantlings 4s. 4d., and then there is another line at 5s. 6d. You will see there is no mention whatever of 3s. 9d.

119. Do you say there is no increase in the cost of timber during that period?—There has been a great increase in the cost of production.

120. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] What quantity of timber do you put through?—It varies.

121. Roughly?—Do you wish me to answer that question here?

122. *Hon. the Chairman.*] We wish to know?—I do not like my opposition here to know. I should be pleased to give it to you afterwards.

123. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] You will give this information as to the quantity of timber you pass through your mills and the quantity of red-pine?—It will be difficult, because a city mill is different to a bush mill.

124. What are you doing? Making mouldings?—Anything.

125. Can you explain why it is so difficult to get kauri here while there are millions of feet going into the other colonies?—We have a great difficulty in getting it from the mills, and a great difficulty in getting it from Auckland.

126. Have you ever imported kauri from Australia, because it has been stated that it can be bought cheaper in Melbourne than here?—Oh, no, no!

127. Do you think it would pay to buy Oregon in long lengths and recut it into short lengths?—No, no. I would not take it on any time.

128. Do you think it would be fair to take the duty off lengths over 30 ft.?—It would not make any difference to me.

129. Have you got any seasoned timber in your yard?—We have at times a good stock of flooring. At one time, when the contractors used to deal with the yards, we used to keep supplies.

130. Would they give you a good price for seasoned timber if they could get it?—They would give their order at the same time as they order scantlings—possibly for a couple of months while doing other works. If they post the orders around we would cut it green and charge no extra.

131. Do you think it would be reasonable to expect timber to be sold at the same rate as twenty years ago?—It would be impossible to produce timber at the same price as twenty years ago, because there would be extra cost of production, the cost of going further for it, and wages have gone up very much.

132. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you think the difference between the prices then and now would be fair? Taking into consideration that they have to go further back for the logs, and that the wages have been raised, do you mean to say that there would be more profit now than at that