

75. Will you supply it confidentially to the Chairman?—You had better apply to the Southland mills.

76. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Will you supply it if we ask for it in writing?—I have no doubt it will be supplied.

77. *Mr. Mander.*] What price have you to pay for Oregon delivered in Dunedin?—My memory is very defective, but we have some at £1 1s.

78. Have you got Oregon here cheaper than red-pine?—Certainly not.

79. Do you think Oregon is likely to reduce the cost of buildings?—I do not think so.

80. Therefore the introduction of Oregon will not be of any benefit to the working-man in regard to the reduced price of his dwelling?—I do not think so.

DUNEDIN, FRIDAY, 2ND APRIL, 1909.

EDWIN BROAD SWORN and examined. (No. 27.)

1. *The Acting-Chairman (Mr. Arnold).*] What are you?—Manager of the Dunedin Timber and Hardware Company.

2. Can you give the Commission any information in regard to those subjects which it is inquiring into?—The only information I can give is from the retail point of view. I know nothing about the sawmill.

3. Will you tell the Commission what your experience in that connection is?—Well, I have been manager of the Dunedin Timber and Hardware Company for the last ten years, and previous to that I was chief clerk and accountant in the firm of McCallum and Co., which was then the Dunedin Timber Company.

4. Has there been much change since you first commenced in the timber industry in regard to the quantities and prices?—Yes, there has been an all-round change, and more timber is selling now than then. The prices are higher, and there are more merchants in the business in Dunedin than there were at that time.

5. Is the business just as good as it has been?—Yes, a fair amount of business doing.

6. Can you say how much the prices have advanced—what the ruling prices were when you began and when the rises took place?—Well, I cannot carry my memory back twenty years, but about ten years ago timber was being sold at 10s. a hundred feet with 5 per cent. discount, and to-day it is 13s. 6d. with 10 per cent., and against that we have to compete with the Southland mills, and our prices for rough red-pine is 11s. 6d. net.

7. Then, do you not deal with the Southland sawmillers?—Yes, we buy our timber from them.

8. I thought you said you have to compete with them?—We have to compete with them all the same. They compete with us in Dunedin. We do not buy the timber from the same people.

9. Is your firm connected with sawmilling themselves?—Our firm is connected with a saw-miller, but we do not take our timber from him unless he is as cheap as any one else. The bulk of our timber is bought outside.

10. You do not think the advance that has taken place within the last four or five years is too much?—I think not. There has been just as much building done during the last two or three years as previously.

11. But if the timber had been cheaper would it not have encouraged more building?—I think not.

12. You say there is just as much building being done as previously?—Yes.

13. What about the last twelve months?—It has slackened a little within the last twelve months, but there is still a fair amount of building being done.

14. Is your company a Dunedin company?—Although it is called the Dunedin Company it is owned by a private individual.

15. And you say you have no sawmills?—Personally I have no sawmills, but the owner of the company has.

16. And your company goes outside that mill when they can do better business?—Yes.

17. Then, is not your proprietor a member of the Millers' Association?—So far as I know, he is.

18. Then, to get better terms he can go outside the association?—That is so, but not exactly to get better terms; but he cannot always supply, and I go where I can get it cheapest.

19. How do you think the other millers are able to supply you on better terms?—We take the whole of their cutting, and they bring it coastwise. We do not get the timber much cheaper, but we bring it by sea. It comes from Stewart Island and Waikawa.

20. Has your company never received a communication from the Sawmillers' Association to the effect that if you deal with the outside millers they would not supply you with any timber?—No.

21. Do you know of any merchants or builders who have received any such communication?—No, never heard of it.

22. You do not know of the Sawmillers' Association ever having taken such action?—I have not heard of it.

23. And you would not believe that such a thing is being done?—No.

24. What timber do you deal in chiefly?—Red-pine.