

136. Are you interested financially in rimu-milling?—No, I am not.

137. I suppose you are aware that the importation of Oregon last year was considerably less than 5 per cent. of the output of our mills?—It may be so.

138. If that is so it cannot affect our mills to an extent of more than 5 per cent. on their output?—That is so.

139. So that it is not really a very serious matter so far as it affects the employment of saw-millers in New Zealand?—Not very serious.

140. You admit that it is necessary that we should have some Oregon?—I admit that.

141. *Mr. Clarke.*] In reference to the increase in the cost of timber you stated that ten years ago the price was 10s. per hundred, less 5 per cent.: at that time were the differences in the widths of the timber and in the lengths subject to an increased price the same as now?—I think the width then was for 12 in., whereas now it is for 8 in.

142. So that represents the exact amount of increase?—That is so.

143. You spoke about getting your timber on different terms from other sawmillers: do you say that you do not pay the same price all round to sawmillers?—We practically pay the same price all round. There is a distinct understanding as to the wholesale price. The difference is only in the matter of freights and other things—freights, railage, &c.

144. You said that any increase in the erection of brick buildings would have a tendency to keep a check on the price of timber: do you not know that in brick-built areas the proportion of timber used is much greater than in wood-built areas—have you never heard of that?—No, I have not heard of that.

145. It has been stated by yourself that you thought the building in brick would have a tendency to keep a check on the price of timber: now, if it is an established fact that in large areas built chiefly of brick the proportion of timber per head of the population is greater than it is in places where the areas are built of wood, would that not modify your opinion as to building in brick being a check on the price of timber?—Yes, if that was correct, but I very much doubt it. I am satisfied that a wooden house takes more timber than a brick one. I would believe it if I saw it in plain official figures.

146. With regard to the price of kauri, the retail price is £1 12s.?—Yes, less 10 per cent.

147. Do you know what the royalty on kauri is?—No.

148. Assuming that it is 2s.—in some cases it is more—do you not think that from 2s. to £1 12s. in six hundred miles of transit and for handling is rather too much difference?—It looks like it, but we do not get all this difference.

149. With regard to the future, you stated that you thought that you should cut our own timbers to the exclusion of foreign timbers as much as possible?—Only to give employment to our population.

150. You do not advocate the conserving of anything for our future use?—No.

151. *Mr. Morris.*] You told us you could compete with the sawmillers in the supply of building-timber here: is it not due to the fact that a builder can get the whole of his requirements from you?—They have an option.

152. Do you get a preference?—No.

153. As to the Oregon you use, is it second- or third-class timber?—I do not know first-, second-, or third-class. We get “merchantable” and “select.”

154. That is practically a second-class wood. Do you use any timber at all from Greymouth?—No.

155. *Mr. Barber.*] What price do you pay to the mills for their output?—We pay 6s. 6d. for scantling sizes up to 8 in. wide and 7s. 6d. for timber clean for dressing but the same size.

156. What does that cost you to get up here?—Two shillings, freight; 3d., duty; 1d., measuring; about 4d., cartage—that is, roughly speaking, in all about 2s. 9d. on the dray in the yard. There is 2s. profit.

157. You say 2s. 6d. profit on that?—It would be about 2s. profit.

158. The price of Oregon is 8s. 6d.?—In the ship's slings.

159. How does it cost you 13s. to get it into the yard?—Two shillings, duty; 6d., harbour dues; exchange on draft, about 6d. per hundred feet: there is also handling on the wharves, measuring, and cartage.

160. Yes, it would come to about 13s. in the yard. You sell this timber at £1 1s.?—Yes, less 10 per cent., which brings it down to 19s.

161. You told the Commission that you have to give your orders a long time ahead?—That has been my experience.

162. Have you had any experience where your clients have been in the timber trade, and where you have been unable to supply lengths?—Not lately. A couple of years ago things were brisk, and there was some difficulty.

163. Is it not absolutely impossible to supply long lengths for such buildings as warehouses, &c., in New Zealand timbers?—It would be hard to get a 30 ft. or 40 ft. red-pine. Anything up to 20 ft. is easily enough got.

164. Is kauri not used for some of these lengths?—We are never asked for long lengths in kauri.

165. Referring to New Zealand timbers, you say that, although it costs you 13s. in the yard, 2s. 6d. per hundred feet is a sufficient profit, and yet you want 6s. profit on Oregon?—The explanation is that Oregon comes in big sizes—it has to be recut, and it takes a dozen men to handle it.

166. Considering it is necessary to have Oregon in place of kauri, do you think it is fair to penalise those who are erecting buildings in the difference between 19s. and £1 12s. to keep Oregon out?—The difference is £1 9s. 6d. after taking off the discount.