

£400 to replace, to say nothing of the loss of bullocks. He has had to introduce a log-hauler, owing to the increasing roughness of the country. All this costs money, and there is not a great deal out of it in the way of profit.

13. I was told in Southland, the other day, that there were only two millers there who were making money?—That is quite possible. I think it is more than likely that millers like Mr. Massey and McCallum and Co., who have a steady output here, and who have got command of the trade, with the means of getting the stuff ready, are doing very well. A man, however, without the command of trade is in a very different position.

14. Have you any idea what it costs to produce timber?—No.

15. You say you buy at 13s. 6d. less the discount?—I do not get a great extent of that; that is merely for jobbing.

16. What do you pay for sawn timber?—Nine shillings and sixpence. I cannot say that just lately, presuming that you give an order to a sawmiller here for the timber for the job, he will carry you on—presuming you did not order sufficient—he will carry you on at Southland rates through the job. It is only on this last job that I am at now that I found that.

17. What do you call Southland rates?—Nine shillings and sixpence rates.

18. We had it on evidence to-day from a timber-merchant that he could buy ordinary building-timber at 6s. 6d.: do you know what kind of timber that would be?—We have all had promises of certain things. I was offered red-pine at 7s. 6d. to-day from a Southland mill, but that was from a small mill, and some of us have had a little experience of those small mills, and do not wish to repeat it. I regard 9s. 6d. as a fair price, which does not give too much profit to the miller.

19. *Mr. Leyland.*] With reference to seasoning, do you think it is better to work timber up when it is three-quarters dry than when it is fully dry?—That is my experience.

20. We do not do that in Auckland—we season it first?—I might say that in Dunedin I find that if the timber is worked green it shrinks, and you cannot match it. The hard timber does not shrink.

21. *Mr. Morris.*] Do you pay anything extra for seasoned timber here?—You cannot get seasoned timber, and the mill will tell you it is factory stuff. There is very little timber seasoned here. The sawmiller, however, will help you in this way: if it is a decent order he will stack it in his yard for you. I must say they are fairly good that way for a special job, and they charge nothing extra for it. That has been my experience.

22. *Mr. Barber.*] Where do you purchase your timber from?—From any of the agents, or from the sawmillers here.

23. You purchase your timber for 9s. 6d.?—Yes.

24. Where is that purchased?—It is purchased here, and, as I have said, we get it from any of the agents here.

25. Is that the price after railage is paid?—No, railage has to be added. It is the ordinary red-pine, and it will stand me 12s. in my yard.

26. Do you consider yourself a good business man?—Yes, I think so.

*Mr. Barber:* I may tell you, according to the evidence that has been produced, no man has paid 9s. 6d.

*Mr. Field:* They said 13s. 6d.

27. *Mr. Barber.*] You know Mr. Murdoch, of Dunedin?—Yes.

28. Are they working in opposition to you?—They consider I am in opposition to them in joinery.

29. Do you resell timber, or do you buy it for your own use?—For my own use.

30. I understood you were putting this in the yard for sale?—No.

31. You cannot buy on the same terms as a merchant?—I do not take the quantities they do. If I could take a shipload or trainload as they do I might be able to buy at the same price.

32. Mr. Field tried to get you to say that the timber that was purchased for 6s. 6d. was an inferior class of timber?

*Mr. Field:* Mr. Clark is too smart to be misled by me.

33. *Mr. Barber.*] I understood you were putting it into the yard for sale? Then, you do not get the builders' discount?—I get the builders' discount, but not the discount of the man who has the almighty dollar at his back and buys shiploads and trainloads of timber.

34. Messrs. Haddock and Brand and Mr. Massey gave us evidence that they purchased at Stewart Island, Waikawa, and several mills on the main line in Southland at 6s. 6d. for ordinary building-timber, and 7s. 6d. for second quality?—Yes.

35. Do you consider the timber they have got is inferior to what you are buying?—There is a lot of that timber that goes down by the boat of a very inferior character. They take a greater amount and buy better than I can.

36. You do not think that the statement they made is untrue?—No.

37. And the class of timber coming from these is a fair class?—I do not think that the timber that comes on the wharf is equal to the timber that comes on the railway.

38. In that case the timber areas on Stewart Island must be inferior to where you are getting yours?—I cannot say.

39. This is coming from Stewart Island, and they take the whole output of these mills. If the timber is inferior, then the timber you are getting must be superior?—I do not know.

40. It has been said that the reason they can sell for 6s. 6d. is because they have got better timber areas?—Better facilities for getting it.

41. Do you know anything about these areas?—No, I am only speaking of the timber I see on the wharf, and I do not think better timber comes there.

42. Do you say that the timber sent by the Dunedin Timber Company is inferior to yours?—The best timber I have met for many years is from the Catlin's district. I would like to say