

43. *Mr. Field.*] If a man wants to build a house he can stack it on his own ground?—Yes.

44. Do you know if there are better pines on the West Coast?—From general knowledge. Yes.

45. If Oregon is competing, might it not affect our industry at 10s.?—They cannot sell Oregon at 10s.

46. Assuming that it is being sold, as against the timber we sell in Wellington?—If a man wishes to resell he pays a higher price for a house in Oregon, and that is his affair; but I cannot see that Oregon can be sold at 10s. I think on the whole the industry should be protected as far as possible. On broad principles it should be protected.

47. Seeing that they are being faced with this position, that they are now forced to burn the timber, is that a condition of things that should be encouraged?—They have a right to be protected.

48. You are a timber-merchant?—Yes.

49. You buy from sawmillers in Southland?—Yes.

50. How do you manage to buy from the millers?—We manage to make a living. We are buying in large quantities, and every trader knows the difference in buying retail and buying wholesale.

51. Would it be fair to say that you timber-merchants are getting 3s. per hundred more than it costs you?—We cannot get it.

52. Would you be making more than a fair living?—If we got it; in isolated cases we get it.

53. I want to know what is a fair thing for a timber-yard to get?—Is that gross profit or net profit?

54. The gross profit, in order to cover cost of yard, rents, rates, and so forth?—You would want about 2s. for that.

55. It is estimated that we have got some as high as 3s. 3d.?—A good deal depends on how a man handles his timber. We work other business in combination with our yard, to make a good business; another might not.

56. Supposing you buy the whole output, what is the price?—That is, as a rule, a matter of arrangement.

57. There is, of course, a good deal of difference in the price?—About 6d. to 1s.; that varies with the arrangement.

58. Is it not true that if a timber-merchant buys the output of a mill, the miller effects large savings under various heads, because he has not to bother himself over different orders?—Yes, he is saving very considerably by going straight ahead on his logs.

59. The benchman has not to watch the board?—With a slight restriction, you take a man's bulk—i.e., you take all the log will cut—you give him a broad outline of sizes, in order to cut his logs to the best advantage.

60. Is he not saved expenditure by not having to saw his timber to specification?—He is saved considerably by not having to do with lengths and sizes.

61. I am informed that the difference would be at least 1s. 9d.?—Yes.

62. Is that a fair proportion?—It would not be far away from it. It is difficult to put the exact figure, but I should say from 1s. to 1s. 9d., according to the mill cutting.

63. Do you know anything about Stewart Island and Waikawa? Are the mills there all near the water's edge?—Yes, generally speaking.

64. What is the freight charged consumers for bringing it round to Dunedin?—Two shillings.

65. And the railway freight?—Two shillings and ninepence from Riverton.

66. They save 9d. there?—No, there is wharfage, 3d. Then, again, if you bring it over the railway you bring it ready to be carted on to the job, whereas from the mill it has got to be sorted there and delivered; so that, although having saved in the one direction, you have got to cart it into a yard and recart it on the other side.

67. We find some mills are selling their output at 6s. 6d.?—At 6s. 6d. for their rough.

68. And 7s. 6d. for their clean?—Yes.

69. I want to show that there is a difference?—I do not think Mr. Massey was very far out in that estimate. These are figures regulated by what you can buy at.

70. I should like to know whether the millers who are selling at 6s. 6d. are doing any good?—They are not making a fortune out of it. I happen to be interested in one or two mills, and they are not making a fortune.

71. Have you heard any complaint about the price of timber?—No, any more than in any other line of business, except that people lately have an idea that there is a gold-mine in timber; they had better try it.

72. *Mr. Leyland.*] In regard to kauri in Auckland, and the selling-price there, there was a gentleman who said there was more than 5s. in kauri. I tried to follow where the price came in; first of all I put down the price at 19s. 6d., 6d. more than you put it?—I saw the evidence: he would probably pay more, because he was buying special lengths.

73. That is a point that has not been brought out?—That is quite apart from the extra charge on wide and long timber.

74. I have got down 19s. 6d., to which must be added freight, wharfage, cartage, and checking on wharf?—That is a regulation estimate, as anybody knows.

75. I make that total £1 4s. 6d. I conclude that you would hold that timber in stock for at least three or four months?—Often longer than that, in a case of kauri.

76. At 5 per cent. a modest amount to put down would be 3d.?—Yes.

77. Then the measuring-out or waste, I put that down at 1s. 3d.?—I said 1s.

78. Then there is sawing and loss on conversion?—Which would often make a considerable difference. Then there is another factor: perhaps a man wants a 7 by 5, and the nearest size you