

regard it almost as criminal to put that timber in a building?—You get a good timber in rimu right close out on to the bark. I should not hesitate to put it into a house of my own.

220. We have heard a good deal said about this alleged timber combination. Do you think that combinations are confined to the timber trade between buyer and seller—that is, in other trades have you not heard of so-called combinations?—I have heard of combinations in other trades; we all have, right up to the newspapers which we read in the morning.

221. *Mr. Clarke.*] Now, with regard to the question of discounts, it was stated by Mr. Seager that the members of the Builders' Association have preferential discounts. Is that so?—Our way of doing business is that we give a trade discount to any man who makes his living by the use of timber, whether cabinetmaker or manufacturer.

222. *Mr. Ell.*] With regard to the last shipment of Oregon, can you tell us what price was charged for it, c.i.f.?—You are opening up a pretty big question, and I cannot give an answer to that in a straight-out way, because certain classes of Oregon are sold at certain prices—that is, when you get into different sizes you pay different prices.

223. I am speaking of No. 1 merchantable?—That is the only class that is coming here. If you get lengths up to 16 ft. and 24 ft., that is one price; up to 40 ft. is another price. I can give you the market quotations to-day. The flat rate for Oregon to-day would be about £4 5s. per thousand, c.i.f.—that is the last quotation, or rather it is three of four weeks since I received it; and since then I have not looked the quotations up. There is, however, an upward tendency in the price of Oregon.

224. You do not think there is any immediate danger of Oregon displacing the rougher building rimu timber, such as is cut at our sawmills?—No, unless there is a slump in the American timber-market again, and then the danger would recur.

225. At present you cannot afford to sell Oregon at a lesser price than you receive for ordinary building-timber—viz., 14s. 6d.?—When we bought that Oregon timber we were on a good wicket. The ordinary rate then was 7s. 6d. per hundred, and it has gone up over 1s. already. Of course, if you get long timber you pay more, and you cannot get long timber for that price.

226. For what would you be able to sell a 30 ft. length red-pine?—I cannot tell you unless I go and look it up. There is 6d. per hundred feet extra for every additional foot. I think 30 ft. would be about 4s. extra.

227. What would you sell a 30 ft. Oregon at?—Oregon costs 16s. and rimu 19s. 6d.

228. So that it is in the greater lengths that Oregon scores?—Yes.

229. That is due to the fact, is it not, that sawmillers have difficulty in getting long lengths out of New Zealand timbers?—I am not going into the sawmilling trade.

230. You cannot get it at the price from the sawmiller?—There are other factors to be taken into consideration. For instance, the freights charged by the railway and also by the Union Company are greater in proportion on long lengths than on short lengths. There is so much extra per hundred for carrying the long lengths. Then, there is only a certain amount of over-hanging allowed, and if you start to bolster timber you have to pay for that. Therefore the difficulty in transit is one of the main factors.

231. These long lengths are occasionally required for building operations?—Yes.

232. In view of that fact, do you not think it would be necessary to our building industry to allow Oregon to come in at a reduced rate, at least in the larger sizes?—I have already stated that if you left it alone it would be all right. I do not say it should be increased.

233. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Are you aware that there is a shipment of Oregon in Dunedin at the present time?—I hear so.

234. Do you know if there is any of that for Christchurch?—I have none coming to my yard.

CHARLES TAYLOR sworn and examined. (No. 40.)

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What are you?—A member of the firm of Taylor Bros., builders, Tuam Street, Christchurch. During the evidence this morning I gathered that the Commission desired some definite information with regard to the amount of timber contained in a given house. I have a plan here of a contract we carried out, of six rooms and conveniences, also a detailed statement of the cost. Approximately there are 15,500 ft. of timber in the building. [Statement put in.] The rooms are 15 ft. by 12 ft., 14 ft. 6 in. by 14 ft., 11 ft. by 5 ft. 6 in., 12 ft. 6 in. by 14 ft., and 10 ft. by 10 ft.; pantry, 7 ft. 6 in. by 5 ft.; bathroom, the same; wash-house, 7 ft. by 8 ft.; and scullery, 7 ft. by 8 ft. There is also a verandah in between.

2. And what is about the cost of that-sized house?—The contract price for that house was £495.

3. How long ago was that?—That was in 1906—July—and the whole of the rough timber came from the Coast. It was a direct order, and was supplied at 12s. 9d.

4. Did it come direct from the mill?—Direct from the mill to the station through a Christchurch merchant. It was put on to the job, but I am not quite sure whether the 12s. 9d. was at the station or on the job.

5. Can you say what that-sized house would cost at the present time?—No, because the price of timber has considerably advanced.

6. How much?—There is a considerable increase in almost every line.

7. But can you specify any amount which you think it would cost, showing the increase during that time?—I could not tell exactly. I should say there has been about a 10-per-cent increase since then.

8. That would be 1s. per hundred feet?—Yes.