

168. Do you consider it perfectly legitimate to lock up further timber areas to provide for our future supply?—I think that if a timber-merchant did not do that he would be very foolish.

169. If you purchased an area of timber lands, which might otherwise be destroyed, and held it for twenty years, would you not by so doing conserve the timber-rights of this country?—Yes; but I do not think it is possible to do that unless you could buy the freehold, and you cannot get the freehold from the Crown.

170. That is so, but you could buy from private individuals?—There is not much freehold bush land left now. The position obtaining on the West Coast is different from the position obtaining in the kauri districts.

171. When importing timber from other countries—say, Oregon—do you consider it would come out drier in the hold than on the deck: which would you prefer if you were importing?—I should very much prefer to have my timber below, because on the deck it stands a chance of getting washed about and saturated with salt water.

172. Do you not think that timber in the hold of a vessel sweats considerably?—The Oregon that I have had here all came in vessels—steamers that were not long in coming—and I have not noticed any deterioration from that point of view.

173. In regard to conserving the smaller trees in a bush that has been leased for sawmilling purposes, do you not think that the dead tops, &c., of the larger trees which would be strewn about would be very liable to catch on fire, and so the whole scheme might go up in smoke?—There is more danger in that respect than in the virgin forests. There is very little doubt but that what you state would take place sooner or later. There is always a lot of wood left about where timber has been worked out of a forest.

174. *Mr. Field.*] Were you in Wellington last year when that large deputation from the Timber-millers' Association waited on the Government?—Yes.

175. Do you remember any offer made to the Premier at that time with regard to milling at a certain price?—They said the Government could fix the price, and several made a statement to the effect that they would hand over their books to the Government. I think they are still prepared to do that.

176. *Mr. Ell.*] You said that the Timber-merchants' Association was prepared to supply anybody: are you prepared to allow anybody the same discount?—Anybody who earns his living from the use of timber.

177. Do you not discriminate against the two men?—We do not discriminate at all in the matter of discount.

178. With regard to buying, is it possible for any miller outside the association on the West Coast to sell to any one of the timber-merchants in Christchurch?—I do not think they would buy from them, because we have been so messed up in our supplies that we have arranged with the West Coast sawmillers that if they will lay themselves out to supply the Christchurch market we will get our supplies from them so far as they are able to supply.

179. With regard to leaving the young timber, are you aware that the timber regulations in America, in any considerable forest, require them to take the bigger trees out with great care, and thus leave the younger trees to develop?—No, I did not know that that was being done. It would require much supervision in the felling. I have also heard that in several districts in America the timber is nothing like so inflammable: for instance, the redwood is almost unflammable, and will not burn.

180. *Mr. Barber.*] With regard to the association, are there any printed rules belonging to it?—No. We have rules just in the ordinary way, and each member is supplied with a copy of the rules.

181. Could you supply the Commission with a copy of the rules?—Yes.

182. *Mr. Morris.*] Mr. Ell asked you if you were aware about certain timber regulations under which they only took the heavy timber and left the young trees standing. Do you think it is practical to do that on the West Coast?—No, I should not say so. I think the sooner it is cleared the better, once the big timber is removed. It would be very liable to be burned. The timber that is left is of little use.

183. *Mr. Mander.*] Do you think that the Government regulations in some measure compel the destruction of timber by compelling the lessee to cut it out in a certain period?—Of course, there is only a certain area, and it has to be worked out in a certain time, and you must keep on working.

184. And work it out in a certain time?

185. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are wrong, Mr. Mander. Have you not had an extension?—Yes.

186. Did you ever know any one that was refused?—No, I do not think I have.

187. I would like you to quote the price of flooring from the Southland mills?—The price is: Tongued-and-grooved flooring and lining—4 by $\frac{1}{2}$ T. and G. per 100 ft., 12s. 6d.; 4 by $\frac{5}{8}$ T. and G. per 100 ft., 13s. 6d.; $4\frac{1}{2}$ by $\frac{3}{4}$ T. and G. per 100 ft., 14s.; $4\frac{1}{2}$ by 1 T. and G. per 100 ft., 15s.; $6\frac{1}{2}$ by $\frac{1}{2}$ T. and G. per 100 ft., 11s. 6d.; $6\frac{1}{2}$ by $\frac{5}{8}$ T. and G. per 100 ft., 13s.; $6\frac{1}{2}$ by 1 T. and G. per 100 ft., 14s.; rough T. and G. per 100 ft., 1s. 6d. less than above: $\frac{1}{2}$ in. extra in width added for tongue.

188. That is the price in Dunedin in the yard?—Was it seasoned?

189. It does not say?—I have been making inquiries, and I find the practice in Dunedin is not to season their timber, and that wants to be taken into consideration when comparing the prices with ours. The price that we quote is for seasoned lines.

190. *Mr. Ell.*] There was a difference of 4s. per hundred feet?—We only make 2s.

191. Here is the price-list of John Murdoch and Co., of Dunedin. Their price for tongued and grooved, 4 by 1, is 18s.?—Ours is only £1 0s. 6d.