

122. Do you know that as a fact or by reading?—It is only from what I heard those acquainted with it saying. The officer of this boat told me it is floated down to the boat in millions of feet bound together.

123. Are you aware that they tap their timber, and that the trees which are tapped produce very inferior timber, and that it is that timber which is sent to New Zealand?—I have not heard that. I should think it is hardly likely. I do not think they would go tapping the timber-trees purposely.

124. But is not that their system for the purpose of getting a large product?—It is quite possible it may be.

125. Do you not think that, as the demand for Oregon increases, as it is increasing in the different markets of the world, there is a greater likelihood of our getting unseasoned timber here?—I do not think so. As far as my experience is concerned in regard to Oregon both here and in Melbourne, it always seems to come here in the same state. It has never come in green. It always seems to have been cut a considerable time before.

126. You have had experience in the factory with Oregon pine?—Yes, fifteen years ago. My experience here covers twenty-five years.

127. You say that the timber you receive here now is as well seasoned as that which you received twenty-five years ago?—Yes.

128. *Mr. Stallworthy.* Do you think 5 per cent. is a sufficient builders' discount?—No, I do not.

129. You think the merchants should allow you more than that?—Yes.

130. Would you consider 10 and 12½ per cent. too high for a trade discount?—I think 10 per cent. would be a fair discount.

131. Are the list prices the actual prices, or do you know of any special discounts allowed any individuals?—I do not know of any special discounts except from hearsay. As far as the list produced is concerned, there are some merchants who allow a further discount, and I think that is done to gain trade.

132. There is cutting into the prices even below the list prices?—Yes. I know one firm which gives 7½ per cent. besides the 2½. In fact, I bought a small line myself and received that discount.

133. In tendering for building-work, is it the practice for builders to give the customer the benefit of the builders' discount?—No, it is not.

134. The effect of the competition does not tend to make builders do that?—Not as far as my experience goes. I think the builder is as justified in having his perquisites as a draper is in receiving his profit on the material when making a suit of clothes.

135. What does the builder do for his customer for that discount—what service does he render for it?—He has an office staff to keep up and an establishment.

136. But he charges for all that?—And he has a certain amount of wear-and-tear on his plant, and losses, to make good.

137. Has the importation of Oregon lessened the cost of buildings?—No, I do not think so. It has made no reduction.

138. I suppose your association discusses matters affecting the building trade?—Principally.

139. Has the association anything to suggest in the way of developing the building industry?—I cannot say that we have, because I think it is financial. When finance is easy and money plentiful there is generally more building going on.

140. There is no other cause?—I do not think so.

141. You told us that a merchant said there were more builders outside your association than in it. When the merchant made that statement was your association asking for any special concession, and so caused him to say that?—I forget the circumstances under which that was said.

142. Has your association ever asked for any special concession?—No. I think when that statement was made it was with regard to this discount business. There were a great number, we found out, outside the association who were receiving discount, and this merchant made the statement then that there were as many outside the association as in it, and that he would be very glad to have them on his books. He would like the whole of their trade without the 5 per cent.

143. *Mr. Mander.* You said you had to pay extra prices for wide timber, and for timber over a certain length?—Yes, sir.

144. Do you know whether the merchants have not also to pay a higher price for that class of timber to the timber-merchant?—I could not say.

145. Do you not think it is likely?—As regards the Oregon that has been imported here, it has been landed at Lyttelton all at the same price, but nevertheless the price has gone up for lengths over 24 ft.

146. Considering the merchant would make a very small profit on the ordinary timber, would it not be legitimate to charge a small profit for the special lengths and sizes to make up for that?—Probably.

147. If the duty were taken off Oregon timber doubtless all rough timber would be used for building purposes?—I do not think so.

148. If it was put in cheaper than rimu?—Provided it was imported in larger sizes and had to be cut up into smaller sizes.

149. If the duty were taken off it altogether and the small sizes were introduced into this country?—It would cut a good deal of it out of the market.

150. If that happened you would have to pay very much higher for rimu for better-class work. Do you not think, under such circumstances, it would be reasonable for that result to take place?—Yes, the association recognises that probably that would occur.

151. If the merchants allowed you 10 per cent. instead of 5 per cent., do you not suppose they would have to put up the price of timber to meet that?—Yes.