

Co.'s line. They refused to take our timber out." Is that true, or is it false?—That question was investigated by the Public Works Department at that time, and they decided that we were justified in the action we took. What happened was that Mr. Palmer, who is a very fine man, and a pioneer of the district, sometimes mills and sometimes does not. We never knew when his timber was coming along so that we could fit it into our work. That added to the expense so much that we could not afford to carry it at the price.

272. Then, on page 254: "It is only six miles from the Taupo Totara Timber Co.'s line. They will not take our timber down." Is that true?—I have explained the whole thing.

273. Again, on page 255: "They have refused to take it on the railway"?—There is only the one incident.

274. Take another, Mr. Cox: what do you charge Mr. Cox to take his timber?—We did not take his timber; we bought it, at a certain discount on the market price. He was quite satisfied. What really happened was this: We said "As soon as you timber people get together and enable us to make arrangements for the purchase of the necessary rolling-stock we will take your timber. Until then we will take none." Mr. Palmer had a strip of his bush burnt, and he asked us if we would take his burnt timber. We entered into an arrangement to take it out.

275. Under the terms of your Order in Council, what rates have you the right to charge for freight?—I cannot remember. Probably you have the Order in Council.

276. It is 4s. 8d. per 100 ft. Does the Order in Council say that the customer has to provide his own rolling-stock?—No. It does not say either that we have to carry it at that price, or any price.

277. You argue that the Order in Council is permissive and not compulsory?—That is the law. Carriers are not compelled to carry unless they hold themselves out as carrying any particular goods.

278. You say you are not bound, unless you like, to carry any one freight?—Unless we hold ourselves out to carry it.

279. Did you refuse to carry settlers' produce?—Not as far as I know.

280. Did you not in 1921, before the setting-up of the Commission?—I do not know why we should have done so.

281. How do your freights compare with the Government freights?—I have not gone into that, and I do not know.

282. If I say that they are from 150 to 400 per cent. in excess of the Government freights, are you prepared to deny it?—I do not know. I do not wish to deny it. Our rates were fixed by the Government.

283. Have you sought authority to increase those rates?—Not within my recollection, but we may have.

284. On page 46 of the record of the evidence before the Commission of 1921 Mr. Dalziell is reported as having said—"The company's rates are double of the old Government rates, and the company intend to apply for permission to double them"?—I do not remember that, but if it is on record it is all right.

285. Do you think these rates that you charge are of any use for settlement?—The answer is there, in the fact of the settlement, and the settlers are working. We are trying to bring about a permanent arrangement.

286. How far is the most distant settler from the Putaruru Station?—I do not think there are any beyond the river, which is about thirty-five miles.

287. Are there any settlers beyond Wawa?—There is Mr. Cox, and there are two or three others.

288. There may be two or three there, but of the settlers you mention how far is the most distant from Putaruru?—I do not know. I am not sure of my figures as to distances.

289. How many of them are past fifteen miles?—Some thirty-odd.

290. How far do you say that Tokoroa is?—Eighteen or nineteen miles, but I am not sure of the figures on that side. The Railway Board wanted to take our line to nineteen miles. That line was to include the settlers, or, rather, the bulk of them.

291. Practically all the settlers are now within nineteen miles of the Government railway?—That is so.

292. On a practically level road?—Yes.

293. What quantity of timber do you estimate to be within reach of your railway in the Mokai Valley and round about?—There is said to be about 200 million superficial feet in the Whakamarau. We have about 90 million feet, and the Crown has about the same.

294. *The Chairman.*] Is that log, or sawn timber?—It would be sawn timber in our case. The others are mere estimates, but we have had ours surveyed more accurately, and know where we are. About 33½ per cent. is our waste, and the Government's is about the same class of timber as ours. Our estimate of Tauri-Tutukau is about 150 million feet. It is probably more than that, because, as you know, you are getting out more timber per tree than used to be the case.

295. Do you think it would be safe to say 200 millions?—About 200 millions. A lot of the bushes shown on the map are burnt out, with the exception of a few trees here and there. There is a lot of timber lying about, but those are not sawmilling areas. Those on the map are the only sawmilling areas available.

296. Your total gives 580 millions. Do you suggest that those areas should be made tributary to your railway, and pay something to an amortization fund?—The Royal Commission recommended that.

297. What do you think is a fair proportion to pay towards amortization?—It depends upon what comes over the railway, in proportion to £120,000.