

26. Supposing, as we have had a Validation Board specially set up to inquire into the *bona fides* of transactions between the Natives and Europeans, and to confirm and validate them, irrespective of any technicalities of law: supposing it was necessary for you to go before any tribunal, which tribunal would you prefer—the Council, or any other tribunal?—I have no objection to the Council so long as they have power to settle the matter themselves.

27. If they had power to settle their judgment you would have no objection?—No.

28. Talking about timber land; take the land you are connected with: what do you estimate would be the number of feet per acre?—It varies very much. I should say from 30,000 ft. to 40,000 ft. would be about the average.

29. *Mr. Mander.*] Is that log timber or sawn timber?—That would be log-measurement.

30. What percentage do you reckon you lose on timber between log and mill measurement?—About 25 per cent. The timbers we are working are very faulty timbers—rimu, matai, and totara—and there is a large amount of loss.

31. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] Into your bushes you have constructed tram-lines?—Yes; one nearly eleven miles long.

32. And the labour required to be performed by the Natives is the felling of the timber and placing it on the trucks?—Yes.

33. That is all in the price you gave us yesterday?—Yes.

34. *Mr. Fraser.*] Delivered in the boundaries of the blocks?—In the case we are speaking of it is on the trucks.

35. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] I understand you have tapped these bushes with a tramway, which you built yourselves, at your own expense?—Yes.

36. And it is there on the scene of the timber which is being felled?—Yes.

37. And as the Natives fell it it is put on the trucks?—Yes.

38. The distance of the tram is eleven miles?—Yes; that is about the present length of the tram.

39. You have to bring the timber eleven miles?—Yes; we shall have to bring it further in some instances. We extend our tramway as we extend into the bush.

40. And the further the distance you have to carry it the tramway would lengthen?—Yes.

41. And under these conditions you give how much per foot?—This is a different block.

42. Well, take that one block?—The royalty paid for the block the tramway is in is different.

43. What do you pay for timber in the Tiroa block?—1s. for totara, and 4d. for all other timber—that is, log-measurement.

44. Are there any other conditions?—I may say that when we first started cutting at Mangawhero we had timber-measurement (superficial) and log-measurement, and the Maoris, of their own accord, asked us to alter the system to log-measurement, as sawn-timber measurement was so confusing.

45. What were you proposing to pay for sawn timber?—8d. or 9d.

46. When was that?—About twelve years ago, when we started at Mangawhero. We give 6d. for kahikatea and 9d. for rimu on that block, log-measurement.

47. In the other case you gave us yesterday, was that in the Hohotaka?—Yes.

48. You have no tram in the Hohotaka?—No.

49. How do you work?—We have not started there. We intend to put a tramway down about three miles to where we have a mill in the Government bush. We have secured the right to lay a tram from the Wellington Land Board, and also the Auckland Board, into the Hohotaka bush.

50. What are your terms in the Hohotaka?—I am giving you the net terms: 1s. 6d. for totara, 6d. for rimu and matai (with a bonus of 6d. on first-class heart of matai only), and 4d. for kahikatea.

51. Do you supply the Auckland market with timber?—Yes; we have a small yard in Auckland.

52. What is your freightage?—From that block 3s. 11d. per 100 ft.—from Hohotaka.

53. What are your quotations for Auckland—what do you sell it at?—The main or principal class, 13s. a hundred. We compete with the medium kauri. I may say the conditions of the Auckland market are rather peculiar. There is practically 10 per cent. allowed on all timber sold in Auckland.

54. You allow that to purchasers?—Yes. That is not so in the other markets of New Zealand, I think.

55. On all your small and large quantities?—As far as we are concerned we allow it on all. As a matter of fact, we allow 17½ per cent. on practically all the timber that goes to Auckland.

56. To the sellers?—Yes.

57. What is the mileage from Hohotaka to Auckland?—From where our mill is it is 180 miles.

58. You sell timber, of course, in the Provincial District of Auckland—in the Waikato and other places?—Yes; we have a through freight to Auckland.

59. There is not much difference in the freight?—No; to Cambridge from Mangapehi it is 2s. 11d., as against Auckland 3s.

60. You are quite agreeable and quite satisfied to have a test case as to the validity of these transactions brought in the Supreme Court without any legislation?—Well, of course, we are not anxious for it.

61. But you would prefer that to any legislation?—Yes.

62. *The Chairman.*] You have said that you would prefer to submit the question of the legality of this agreement to a Judge of the Supreme Court: would you prefer to submit the question of the price you have paid for the timber to a Judge of the Supreme Court, or to any other tribunal?—As I said before, it seems a pity to divide the inquiry into two parts. A Judge of the Supreme Court should be capable of deciding the whole matter.