

119. That has been denied by the Harbour Board officials?—Yes.

120. *The Chairman.*] They say it is lifted off the trucks by the ship's whip?—That is the custom, I know. If the wharf is wet the trucks are wheeled alongside and underneath the slings, and they are put round the bales and hoisted aboard.

121. *Mr. Foster.*] As the barque was finishing, it would be hardly likely that there would be an accumulation of many bales on the wharf at any time—particularly if the weather was at all doubtful?—I know the only possibility of an accumulation of bales would be after the sheds were opened at 9 o'clock.

122. It was stated that they took wool back to the shed?—That would only be in the morning that they were referring to. I cannot state as to what took place when I was not there. I know I have been down there when there was a little rain falling, and I have never seen anything like what has been described. I know that some time during the loading some fifty bales were sent out that were not for the ship, and they were sent back to the shed. It was for the "Sardhana," and if that is the wool which the witnesses were referring to it had reached home all right in the "Sardhana."

123. *The Chairman.*] Was that at the same time as the "Pitcairn Island"?—No, she followed her.

124. Is it likely that these men would mistake the wool?—No; the lot I mentioned—some fifty bales were brought out and taken back to the shed at some time during the day, and I am wondering whether they confused the time and circumstances. That wool was put aboard the "Sardhana," and arrived all right.

ALBERT SANDERSON COLLINS sworn and examined. (No. 48.)

125. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—I am shipping clerk to Mr. Scales.

126. You know something about the conditions under which the "Pitcairn Island" was loaded?—Yes.

127. You also have heard the evidence which was given as to the wool being allowed to remain on the wharf and being rolled through the pools of water?—Yes. On the morning of the 14th March, to which the witnesses referred, we started loading at half past 8, and finished at half past 9, and during that period we only took out thirty-nine bales from the trucks from U shed.

128. That was the whole quantity which was taken aboard till 1 o'clock. Was that lying on the wharf while it was damp?—I never saw any.

129. Were you there the whole of the time?—Portion of the time. I was down at the ship every morning.

130. Did you see any of that wool brought or rolled back into the shed?—There might have been some, but I never saw any.

131. Did you see any of it rolled along the wharf?—I do not see how they could roll those heavy bales along the wharf. However, there would only be nineteen and a half dumps.

132. *Captain Blackburne.*] Are they taken out singly?—Two bales are dumped together, and only one would be taken at a time.

133. *Mr. Foster.*] Did you notice if any other wool was out on the wharf?—We had two lots of wool which were stopped from shipment, and were taken back into the shed.

134. Might that be the wool these witnesses were referring to as being taken back?—Probably it is.

135. *Captain Blackburne.*] Is it possible that this wool may have been lying on the damp wharf?—The Harbour Board officials are very careful as to giving receipts for damp wool. I have never had a receipt for a damp bale.

136. And you got a clean receipt for that wool?—Yes, absolutely.

137. *Mr. Foster.*] It came from the shed and went back again?—You understand we never like to split a grower's clip by sending portion on one vessel and portion on another. We could not get the forty bales aboard. If we had done that we might have had to split some-one else's clip, so this wool was sent back to the shed.

138. I thought from your remark that this wool came by rail on to the wharf, and you got a receipt from the Board when they received it, but you had it from the shed?—Yes.

139. If wool comes by rail consigned to you, the Board would receive it?—This wool originally was sent down by the United Farmers, and I had it put in an outside stack, so as to put it into the ship, but after going out it was sent back again to wait for the "Sardhana."

140. At the time it was on the wharf it was still under the Board's responsibility?—Yes. If there was the slightest sign of rain they would be very careful to see that it was not taken out of the sheds, for they are particular about loading wool in the rain.

GEORGE HERBERT SCALES, previously sworn, was recalled and further examined. (No. 49.)

141. *The Chairman.*] You wish to correct something?—I have listened to Mr. Collins's evidence, and I am not quite clear whether he gripped the point of Mr. Foster's inquiry, and I took it that you inferred that wool was lying on the wharf all the morning.

142. *Mr. Foster.*] My object in asking was to show that it would not be on the wharf all the morning?—That wool was not amongst the thirty-nine bales.

143. *The Chairman.*] Was it on the wharf on the 14th?—No.

144. So that could not be the wool they saw?—No.

145. *Mr. Foster.*] You mentioned a certain wool you sent back: it was delivered to the ship's side and you were told they could not take it. That might have been the wool these people saw taken back to the shed?—That could not have been between half past 8 and half past 9, for it was not on the wharf. We had a line of forty bales which could not be taken without splitting a consignment, and portion of it was sent out and put back again.