

owned timber lands than that advocating on one hand the prohibition of timber export, and on the other hand the encouragement of foreign competition to destroy our domestic trade.

What would give us Equal Conditions.—If the Government would say to the sawmiller, "You can work your men as long as you can possibly get them to work, at the lowest rates you can possibly procure them for; you can search the world for your labour, and we don't care whether it is black, yellow, or white; we will give you the chance of collecting all accident insurances from the worker, and from it you will be allowed to retain a commission for doing the business; you can start grog-shops and gambling-machines at every bush camp; we will issue instructions to the General Manager of Railways to enter into low-rate contracts, provided you are a big customer; your rates and taxes shall be reduced to a minimum; and we will repeal the Truck Act," then I would say, Let Oregon come in free—it would be a fair go; but I should be very sorry indeed to see this Americanised condition come about in our fair land.

3. *Mr. Field.*] Have you any papers in proof of your statement concerning that ticket system you have spoken of?—I have here the forms that are used in the mills and bush camps. I would ask, in submitting these to the Commission, that no names should be divulged as to what company these were obtained from, because they were not obtained for the purpose of giving evidence to the Commission. It was merely to show their system of book-keeping and of handling the labourer in connection with deductions from wages earned. I have them all pinned together here, and I hand them in as evidence, for I dare say they will form interesting matter for the Commission to ponder over, because it bears on a very important aspect of the question, I think. I have here a sheet from a lumber company operating in Puget Sound. There is provision made for the man's name and number, the number of days in the month, and so on, the total time, rate, and amount. It is the mill pay-sheet practically. Then follow the deductions which can be made from the men's wages. The first is insurance. Then there are deductions for board, for coupons, for orders, for store accounts, for hospital, and for firewood. There are different headings under which they can charge a man for things which we do not charge him for here—in fact, in some cases it would be illegal to make such charges. For instance, we cannot charge insurance, and that is the first item they put down. Insurance is 25 cents a week, which is equivalent to about a shilling. I have here an actual sheet which has been filled in. This gives particulars of the employment of a man named Dave Youcen, who was employed at a sawmill. He got \$1.50 a day, and he did extra work for which he got \$1. Fifteen cents is deducted for insurance for three days. His total earnings were \$5.35. Here is another sheet, referring to Victor Youcen, who worked three days—namely, on the 28th, 29th, and 30th December, which are holidays with us. His deduction for insurance was 15 cents for the three days. He received \$5.85. Then I have a time-card which has been instituted in some of the logging camps. In this case the man is paid \$1.50 a day, and his insurance is 25 cents. He has been charged, I see, 15 cents, and the rest has been paid him by way of coupons. Then there is another card, which has this notice upon it: "*Take Notice.*—Examine this card each day on receiving it from the timekeeper. If any error is discovered, report same to timekeeper at once, otherwise it *will not be corrected*. This card is not transferable, and will not be redeemed unless presented by party to whom issued. Card must be dropped in card-box at mill before commencing work each day, and must be secured from the timekeeper, *properly punched*, each day, when quitting work; otherwise **YOUR TIME BECOMES FORFEITED**. On the last day of each month this card is dropped in card-box at office, so that your time and amount due you may be entered thereon, and must be called for *no later* than the twelfth of following month, when the **TIMEKEEPER** will deliver it to you. Time-card must be presented at office on pay-day in order to receive your money. When employee wishes to secure merchandise or other order he must also bring this card to office between 5 and 6.30 p.m. only. Employees wishing to quit work at any time must notify their foreman ten days in advance, and have said notice entered on the timekeeper's books, as well as on their time-card, otherwise time will not be cashed until the regular monthly pay-day. — **ABOVE RULES WILL BE RIGIDLY ENFORCED.**" That is the matter in connection with the truck system to which I was referring.

4. *Mr. Barber.*] You say the facilities they have enable them to produce cheaper timber, and that the fact of their being able to turn out a larger output cheapens the timber. One of the arguments against the colonial millers is that their plants are obsolete, and that is why the price of their timber is so high as compared with that of other countries?—That is why I, against my own interests, advocate larger holdings. Having a large holding, it should be to our interests to advocate smaller holdings, because we recognise we could compete more successfully with the small miller than with the large miller. I think if the Crown were to give facilities for better plants it would assist the New Zealand sawmiller to some considerable extent.

5. Do you think that the plants used in New Zealand are practically obsolete?—Some of them; but there are some good plants in New Zealand. Take the Kaipara plant in the Auckland District, and the Auckland plants generally, they are very good.

6. But take the Southland and West Coast plants?—My experience is that that has come about because it is impossible for them to have large plants to operate on only 200 acres of land.

7. And the reserves?—Yes; there are reserves of 800 acres.

8. Do you recognise that the difficulties of producing timber are becoming more acute?—Yes, they must get more acute as the bush gets farther back; but it does not always follow, because if there were a railway constructed like the North Island Main Trunk line it would bring a lot of bush into the market that otherwise would be very difficult of access.

9. But there are many places to which the railway will not be taken?—That is so.

10. Do you not think there must be a limit to which those difficulties can be undertaken by the man producing the timber and the passing-on of the cost to the consumer?—There need be no limit so long as he is properly protected. He could get a tree that grew on the top of Mount Cook at a certain price.

11. You expect the consumer to pay for the cost of going to the top of Mount Cook to get timber if he wanted it?—No; but I look upon the consumer as a member of the community, and as a member of the community he should at least support and protect his own community.