

7 EDWARD VII., A. 1907

Q. Well, then, why would it be revised from time to time and brought up to date, what is the object?—A. The object of this is that any member can see for himself—take myself, if a manufacturer from whom I was buying lumber sold to a contractor or to a consumer in my town I would not buy wholesale from him. That list is revised in that way so that every dealer can simply exercise his own individual ideas, and can either buy from that manufacturer or not as he sees fit.

Q. But when he gets a hint like that he is not very likely to buy from him?—A. That certainly would be a hint to me and I would be governed by it all the time.

*By the Chairman :*

Q. Your argument would lead the committee to believe that the facts are contrary to the evidence. What do you say of the letter which was read here, written by your present secretary? What do you think about that? He would be in a good position to form an opinion, and that letter is very much in opposition to what you have been saying.

*By Mr. Herron :*

Q. It seems to me that perhaps you can give information in regard to the point that I am trying to get at. It is this : it seems to me that when these manufacturers retired as honorary members from this Retail Dealers' Association, it must have been planned that they were to do it. I find that the documents show that they did it simultaneously; here are twenty letters and the only difference in one from the other is the different date and the different headings, but every word in every letter is exactly the same, from the first word to the conclusion. That shows, I think, there was some understanding.

Mr. LANCASTER.—They are exactly the same even to the compliments at the conclusion.

*By Mr. Herron :*

Q. It is the same even to the end of a long letter. It would seem that it must have been a pre-arranged matter that they would change their position from that of honorary members to that of harmonious mills, but that the understanding was that they were to carry out the same arrangement under a different name?—A. So far as these letters are concerned, I think they were pre-arranged simply as between those men who wrote them. It would appear to me they had a meeting at which they decided to withdraw and probably passed a resolution on the lines of these letters, and probably they drafted a letter for each one to sign.

Q. They are all on different headings, and are written on different headlines and on different paper?—A. That is all right; they may have agreed on a form of letter, and evidently did.

Q. And apparently there was an understanding that they would change their name, that even after leaving the association they wished to be on the friendly list; that is indicated in that letter, and then we also find from time to time afterwards that complaints came back, and when complaints of violation of the rules were made, they considered they were on the friendly list, and if any member of your association would not buy from them, then it was claimed it was a violation of the law.

*By Mr. Lancaster :*

Q. I think it is fair to draw Mr. Sprague's attention to the fact that every one of these letters say they believe 'it is advisable in both your interests and ours' that they should withdraw. They have in view certain things. They say:—

'VICTORIA, B.C., Dec. 17.

'ISAAC COCKBURN, Esq.,

'Sec'y Western Retail Lumbermen's Ass'n,  
'Winnipeg, Man.

'DEAR SIR,—Owing to the fact that our position as honorary members of your association continues to be misunderstood and misrepresented by the public and more