

7 EDWARD VII., A. 1907

Q. However, this statement is part of your evidence under oath?—A. I suppose it is.

Q. You swore to this statement being true?—A. Yes, I suppose I have a right to revise that now if the wording is not what a legal man would figure it should be.

Q. What you mean to say is taking this in a common sense interpretation?—A. A common sense interpretation.

Q. It is not only a statement that you wrote out but gives your proper interpretation of the truth?—A. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Sprague has just said that is part of his evidence.

Mr. CROCKET.—Yes, but I say that part of the passage that Mr. Knowles has alluded to is an expression of views, of his own opinion.

*By Mr. Knowles:*

Q. Let me read it again, I am afraid you do not understand, 'The parties thus combining are, I am advised, amenable to the law, and liable to be prosecuted, and if the lapse of time is not a bar to proceedings being instituted, should still be proceeded against if the statement made is correct.'—A. Well, that is my opinion. It is my opinion of the case, I did not get any opinion from anyone else in reference to that.

Q. That is a very satisfactory explanation, that it is only your expression of opinion. Let me read this to you: 'The committee can, in this one case at least, justify the necessity for its appointment.'—A. That is an expression that may have been an unhappy one, but it is an expression that I made use of.

Q. The question I started to ask you about, and I would like to ask you again, is, can you give any reason why the vendors of lumber should be permitted to have a union or organization for the purpose of fixing prices any more than the sellers of any other commodity to the public?—A. Well, no, mark this, the vendors of lumber do not have an organization for the purpose of fixing prices.

Q. I will change the words 'organization for fixing prices,' because I understand those are the words you take exception to. Those who sold lumber in the city of Winnipeg, for example, met together and arranged what they understood would be the price at which to sell lumber?—A. Yes.

Q. And they did it in other towns last year. Now, is there any justification for that in regard to the selling of lumber any more than there is for the selling of any other staple commodity?—A. I do not know that there is any more than anything else. No, I do not think there is any justification for it, except that lumber is a commodity that varies very differently from lots of other things. In lumber there are certain grades, certain qualities of lumber that every person will know the price of. You buy different commodities in the store, and the purchaser, as a rule, does not know the value of them at all. Lumber is a very different article, however, and it is something that should have a uniform price, because there are uniform grades and uniform qualities recognized, and the prices should be uniform, and it should be a fair price, of course. That is the reason I think that they should have a price, and, of course, if they have a price where there are several dealers they have to meet together to discuss it in order to have a price list.

Q. Why not let the individual, the common man who is familiar with the trade, have his price and carry it out?—A. Oh, well, he certainly can do that.

Q. What can be the reasonable objections to allowing any man to buy from the wholesalers, whether he be a contractor or anything else?—A. Well, so far as contracting is concerned, it is a business that might at a certain time require a bill of lumber that can be bought in a carload lot, specified stuff that you can know what it is, and that if the customer prefers can be bought direct from the mill. There are lots of other persons in that same contracting trade that require the services of a dealer, a man that has a stock of lumber, because it will be bought in small quantities, small lots, and if the contractor for the larger bills were allowed to buy direct from the mill it would interfere very materially with the lumberman's business.