

Q. Well, you will excuse me. What makes you think so?—A. I am trying to tell you that it is difficult and I won't undertake to do it. I have noticed the questions that have been asked with reference to the Lumbermen's Association.

Q. That has nothing at all to do with what I am asking you. We are just wasting our time?—A. All right.

Mr. CROCKET.—I think the witness should be allowed to give his explanation.

Mr. KNOWLES.—The chairman will settle that, Mr. Crocket. I think it is a fair question, but I will ask the chairman for his opinion.

The CHAIRMAN.—What is the question?

Mr. KNOWLES.—I ask what is the foundation for his belief that the grocers are joining together in the same way that the lumbermen are?

Mr. CROCKET.—Mr. Sprague was explaining to us that he thought it was impossible to give an absolutely definite answer, and I understood that he was going to give an illustration.

The WITNESS.—I was going to give a little illustration of that.

*By Mr. Knowles :*

Q. You were going to give an answer upon a different question and one that I did not want to know anything about. What is the foundation of your belief in regard to the grocers?—A. I don't know that I have anything definite. As I say, these are questions I am not able to give definite answers to.

Q. Why did you say you thought there was such an understanding?—A. I gave my thought—I suppose that is my privilege—and at the same time I undertook not to give a definite answer. Now, it is simply impossible to give a definite answer to some questions.

Q. We have noticed that?—A. I think you have, and I think you will agree with me, Mr. Knowles, that is quite correct.

Q. I don't agree with you that there is any such understanding among the grocers, and I think after reconsideration you will modify your statement?—A. I won't express any opinion. Probably if I had been a little less quick I would not have expressed any opinion at all.

Q. I think after consideration you will admit there is a potent and effective arrangement among the vendors of lumber which does not exist among the vendors of groceries?—A. I don't know what exists among the vendors of groceries, but I won't admit there is an arrangement that exists among the vendors of lumber.

Q. You won't admit there is an arrangement?—A. No, I am not willing.

Q. Then when you use the word arrangement what did you mean? An arrangement as to prices?—A. An arrangement as to prices if you like.

Q. What was it made you raise the price of your lumber?—A. Because the price of the lumber I bought was higher and in order to make any money out of it I was obliged to raise it.

Q. You did it absolutely for that reason?—A. Yes.

Q. You did not do it because other people were raising the price of their lumber?—A. I suppose other people raised theirs.

*By Mr. Lancaster :*

Q. Did I understand you to say, Mr. Sprague, that the association has no effect whatever on the price charged to the consumer?—A. Not the slightest.

Q. You say absolutely it has no effect whatever?—A. I say it has absolutely no effect whatever. There is no understanding or no effect as such.

*By Mr. Crocket :*

Q. The association fixes the prices, does it?—A. The association does not fix the price.

The CHAIRMAN.—According to all the evidence we have here it does.