

1873.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE TIMBER FLOATING BILL.

Report brought up 9th September, 1873, and ordered to be printed.

THE Committee are of opinion that the power possessed by lower holders on the banks of a creek, to obtain an injunction to prevent the floatage of timber by upper holders, is liable to be abused, to the injury of a most important industry. At the same time the Committee are of opinion that it would not be advisable in some creeks, adjacent to which settlement is progressing, to permit the driving of timber except under stringent regulations.

The Committee recommend that the Bill should contain provisions by which it may be decided from time to time by competent authority what creeks shall be used for driving timber, and by which prompt compensation may be paid in case injury is done to holders of land on the banks of creeks.

The Committee recommend that the Act should apply only to creeks within any Province which from time to time the Superintendent of that Province shall appoint, with a power of revoking such appointment.

That only persons licensed so to do should float timber under this Act, and that licensees should give security adequate to meet the claims of any persons whose property they may damage.

Wellington, 9th September, 1873.

JULIUS VOGEL,
Chairman.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 2nd SEPTEMBER, 1873.

WILLIAM SWANSON, Esq., M.H.R., examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You are a settler in the Province of Auckland, and have some experience in the matter to which this Bill refers? Yes. *Mr. Swanson.*

2. If we shut up this floating of timber down these creeks, would we not prevent forests from being utilized in many cases? I do not think you would. I do not see that there would be any difficulty in bringing the timber out by ordinary roads or by tramways. My experience in getting timber out is confined to my own creek, Henderson's Creek, and Canty's Creek. What the position may be in other places, I cannot tell, but I do not think it would be difficult to make arrangements with the owners of land generally. 2nd Sept., 1873.

3. Are there not forests where it would be difficult to take tramways, but where the timber could be easily got out by floating or driving it down the creeks? There may be.

4. You speak of your experience in certain creeks; would it have paid you as well to have made a tramway as to have floated out the logs? No; it would not have paid me as well. I had not the means to make a tramway when I began. All the land on the creek belonged to the Government, and it was quite impossible for me to do any damage. Soon after settlers came below me: I had to stop. It paid me better to float the timber down.

5. *Mr. Rolleston.*] In any circumstances, the timber must be rolled for some distance. Could it not as easily be put upon a tramway? I believe that I could have taken the timber out by tramways, and still had a balance left in my favour. The profit would not have been so large.

6. *The Chairman.*] Would you have had any profit at all? Yes; I would. I would have had to make a road four miles in length.

7. Are there not some forests twenty miles from where the logs have to be sawn? There may be; but I am not aware of it.