

Mr. Brissenden. there are short tramways, where there is a piece of bush on a table land, merely for transporting the logs to the head of the gully, and then the creek is used.

4th Sept., 1873.

70. You have only seen tramways used in flat country? Yes, only in flat country. I may instance the Hauraki saw-mill, where the timber is got from a kahikatea forest, covering 30,000 or 40,000 acres of swamp, and where tramways are used. The trees there are very close, and the tramways are used to get them down to the mud creeks. The water is all tidal.

71. Can you give us any idea of the loss by the process of floatage? I could only give a rough guess. The loss is sometimes heavy through floods. I have been informed that Captain Daldy lost two years' work by one flood. That was because of neglect in not having the booms in proper order. I may state that Captain Daldy recovered most of the logs, but the cost of so doing was as much as the logs were worth. I may say that I have not been practically working timber in New Zealand.

72. Are you aware whether these creeks have been used for bringing down anything but the trunks? I am not aware. They do not float down the upper parts of trees, because if they did they would stop the creeks. Before they use a creek at present they have to clear it of snags and obstructions.

73. In your evidence you have only referred to kauri forests? Yes; but there are occasionally hardwood trees.

74. Would these woods float? I think some of them could be floated.

75. **Mr. McGlashan.]** Would these branches and tops of trees be of any use? Not the slightest; it would not be the interest of any lumberer to do anything with them.

76. **The Chairman.]** Could they be utilized if there were a tramway? I do not see how they could.

THURSDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER.

Mr. ARTHUR FOLLETT HALCOMBE examined.

Mr. Halcombe.

4th Sept., 1873.

77. I wish to give evidence as to the necessity of such a measure in this Province of Wellington, and to state that in my opinion it is of great importance that the use of the streams for the floatage of timber should be made legal, and I would instance the district in which I am particularly interested—namely, Manawatu. (Mr. Halcombe produced map.) This stream, the Oroua, runs through a large extent of country, and the whole of it on one side, and part of the other side, is bush land, the trees being chiefly totara. It is a narrow stream, and I believe there is no legal right to make use of it for floating timber. The stream is amply sufficient to float down railway sleepers from this point (indicated) to where they can be carried down the Manawatu. By floating them sleepers can be taken down at not more than half the price it would cost to take them to Foxton by tramway. I consider it a matter of great importance that this means of carriage should be available. These rivers being available, it is proposed to bring down large quantities of sleepers at once. The timber I speak of is on Colonel Feilding's block. Railway sleepers may also be floated down the River Pohangina. The timber will merely be floated down without diminishing the stream. The Oroua is only a chain wide. It is not a navigable river.

78. **The Chairman.]** If this Bill does not pass, the owners of the land on the stream may prevent you taking the timber down? Yes; they may. We should not be able to use it.

79. Are you willing to pay damage that may be caused through the floating down of the timber? Yes; but I do not think any damage whatever would be done. We should merely make use of the stream in its natural state.

80. Suppose at any time a fresh were to occur, and that then your timber should do damage? Possibly some damage might be done in a fresh to the projecting points of land.

81. **Mr. Kelly.]** Is that a valuable bush upon that block? It is either very light or very heavy. The heavy bush is totara and matai; the light bush is tawa. There is a large Native reserve on the river, twelve miles by two, a large proportion of which is covered with totara.

82. Can you float the matai? Some of the matai may float when it is dry, but it is doubtful.

83. **The Chairman.]** We have been told that by the floating of timber at periods of fresh, there is liable to be ruin and devastation along the banks. Is that your experience? I have not had much experience in the floating of timber. My experience goes to show that logs do no damage in floating except to themselves. Of course, I can easily understand that where no damage might be caused so long as the land on the river banks remained in its natural state, that damage might take place when the land was cleared. There are many streams in the Province of Wellington in the same position as these I have referred to, leading into the bush country, and which might be made use of for bringing down timber, and where the expense of making tramways would be enormous.

84. We have been informed that tramways could be used in almost all cases? No doubt tramways could be made, but to have the timber brought down by the creeks would be an enormous saving of capital.

85. **Mr. O'Connor.]** In this particular case, there is a tramway to the land, but by a roundabout road? There is not one at present, and probably it will be eighteen months or two years before it is ready, whereas it is proposed immediately to commence floating down these sleepers.

86. I understand you to say that it would be impossible, as the law stands, for you to float down timber? Not impossible, but we should be liable to be stopped at any moment. We should merely be doing it on sufferance.

FRIDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1873.

THOMAS HENDERSON, Esq., M.H.R., examined.

Mr. Henderson.

5th Sept., 1873.

87. **The Chairman.]** You have much knowledge of the timber trade, I believe? I have had a good deal of experience in bygone years.

88. It has been represented to the Committee, on one hand, that the power to drive timber in creeks is liable to be used so as to do immense injury to property. On the other hand, it has been