

Kaimata to make inquiries on the ground. The facts, in short, stand as follow: Thomas Lawry is the successful tenderer for the supply of 4,000 railway-sleepers, 2,000 for the Government, and 2,000 for the Midland Railway Company line. He applied to the Crown Lands Ranger for licenses to enable him to cut these sleepers, but that officer informed him that the department had ceased issuing timber licenses since the beginning of the present year. Lawry, finding that he could not get authority to cut, set about the work without authority. After cutting about eight hundred sleepers (all silver-pine), the Midland Railway Company informed him that he would have to pay a royalty according to their schedule of prices, and, moreover, that the ground he was cutting upon had been applied for some time ago for timber-cutting purposes by some other contractors, and that, therefore, he (Lawry) would have to desist cutting sleepers there in future. Matters had reached this stage when Lawry telegraphed to Wellington that he had been stopped by the Midland Railway Company. Since then an arrangement has been come to, and which seems satisfactory to all parties concerned, which is this: To the applicants (the other contractors above referred to) the Midland Railway Company intend to give an area of 200 acres for timber-cutting purposes. For all timber they remove payment of the royalties as provided in the company's timber-license regulations will have to be made. Mr. Lawry, on the other hand, is to be allowed to complete his contract for the 4,000 railway-sleepers by cutting the silver-pine on the southern portion of said 200 acres on payment of the royalty fixed for these.

There are several other contracts for the supply of thousands of silver-pine railway-sleepers now in hand in other parts of Westland, and it is of the utmost importance that this question of timber-cutting should be speedily settled. As matters stand now, contractors, however willing to pay for the cutting of timber, cannot obtain authority to do so. The Lands Department does not issue timber licenses within the area set apart for Midland-Railway purposes, and the Midland Railway Company is not legally in a position to deal with them. The inevitable result is that persons set about cutting without authority. The company cannot stop them doing so, but they can, and will, apply to the Government to do so. This is the course Mr. Alan Scott intended to pursue in the case of Lawry if the amicable arrangement above detailed had not been come to.

GERHARD MUELLER,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

[Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,200 copies), £5 15s.]

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1890.