

*Timber under the Warden.*

*Security of Title.*—A miller has no security, as his rights are open to be challenged at any time, owing to a legal technicality.

*Finance.*—The insecure title and no reliable asset outside plant seriously hampers necessary financing. The Warden has no power to grant the necessary time to lay the long main lines of tramway (generally of steel, and very expensive) which are now required, as the available bush lies considerable distance from established mills and Government railways.

*Royalty.*—The Crown has absolutely no security, as timber may be cut and sold, and the proceeds devoted to other purposes, before the Crown can even take legal proceedings for the recovery. In case of simultaneous working of Crown areas and freehold bush, the onus of proof of amount of royalty due to Crown rests wholly upon the Crown, whose Ranger has to be a detective.

*Cutting Operations.*—There is no incentive nor necessity for a miller to work and cut anything but the best and most accessible timber, as he only has to pay for what he actually takes and sells in marketable timber, regardless of waste resulting from careless milling and other causes.

*Isolated Blocks of Timber.*—As a miller can only hold one sawmill-area regardless of size he cannot obtain any right from the Warden to cut out small isolated blocks which are on his road to the sawmill-area, and these are therefore left, and will probably never be cut, and eventually be destroyed at loss to the Crown.

*Administration.*—Wardens, as a rule, are not well versed in matters relating to practical saw-milling, and deal with all applications on purely legal lines.

*Timber under Land Act.*

*Security of Title.*—A miller would have a secure title for whatever time the Land Board thought reasonable to allow for the cutting-out of an area.

*Finance.*—Security of title and the asset of standing bush bought for cash, being the property of the miller, provides a negotiable asset to finance on its prospective value after milling. Under the Land Act length of tramway can be considered when the time for cutting is being fixed by the Board.

*Royalty.*—Standing bush can be sold for cash, and millers would find no hardship to pay, as they would have the undoubted security to offer, if necessary, to finance. In cases of simultaneous cutting from Crown and freehold the Crown runs no risk of suffering loss, and therefore no objection would need to be offered to simultaneous cutting.

*Cutting Operations.*—Having had to pay for the whole of the timber as it stands assessed by the Crown's own officers, any timber that he leaves or wastes is his own loss, and naturally the bush will be thoroughly worked, and therefore the land will be more suitable for settlement.

*Isolated Blocks of Timber.*—The Land Board would have power to grant special licenses for areas up to 80 acres, and this would meet the difficulty at present encountered, and mean a decided increase in revenue to the Crown.

*Administration.*—A Commissioner, by virtue of his field experience, must be more competent to deal equitably with sawmillers, at the same time protecting the Crown and keeping the future settlement of the land in view; he also has officers specially trained to the work.

No. 13.

SIR,—

Hobson Buildings, Auckland, 25th April, 1913.

I have the honour to bring the following matter under the notice of the Commission:—

I am aware that the evidence mainly sought for by your Commission is in regard to the conservation of existing forests and the cultivation and protection of plantations of timber-producing trees, but I would venture to suggest that the threatened early exhaustion of the sources of our locally produced timber might be partially averted by encouraging farmers and landholders generally throughout the Dominion to plant quick-growing timber-trees on such portions of their estates as are unsuitable for agricultural or pastoral purposes. Nearly every farmer has areas, smaller or larger, of this character, and the systematic planting of such areas would in some twenty years or so be of great assistance in supplying local timber wants and bring a useful revenue to the next generation and to the younger members of this.

The means to this end appear to me to be the issue of circulars from the Forestry Department to such persons as had the facilities for tree-planting in the manner indicated, the co-operation of the same Department in supplying suitable young trees at cost-price, and an arrangement with the Railway Department for the free carriage of the trees to *bona fide* planters.

Speaking as one who has visited every town and hamlet in Otago and Southland, as well as having travelled extensively through the rest of the Dominion, it is deplorable to see the hundreds of farms with not a tree on the property. The reason for this neglect is not so much the ignorance of the advantage of having trees on their estates, whether it be for shelter for their stock, or the enhancement of the attractiveness of their properties, or the ultimate direct gain of having timber-trees to sell, as the feeling that it is outside their main business of farming, and that they know very little about tree-growing, while the expense of purchasing trees and the cost of carriage to their farms would involve an outlay they in many cases could ill afford.