

the timber costing not less than 6d. per 100ft. extra to remove off the hill; distance from rail or water carriage should also be taken into consideration in valuation of bush.

3. *Recommended*, That instead of the limit of area being on an average basis it should be based on quantity; and that the minimum should be 4,000,000—that is, equal to 200 acres at 20,000 per acre; and that the survey should be on this basis, and further reserve should consist of three similar areas.

4. *Recommended*, That all Crown lands suitable for sawmilling should be reserved for timber purposes, and should not be cut up for settlement until after the sawmiller has utilised all timber fit for sawing.

5. *Recommended*, That the Government devise some means by which the sawmiller may be enabled to lease lands from the Natives for the purpose of removing the timber.

6. *Recommended*, That, in the case of a mixed bush, where one particular description of timber has been cut out on one area the miller should have the right of cutting on the next area; also, should any small area of isolated timber be available for any particular mill, the same shall be allowed to be cut under the supervision of the Ranger.

7. *Recommended*, That in cases of mills working on Midland Railway reserves from which at present the Government are receiving royalties it is proposed to ask the Government to protect such millers to the extent of granting them permission to record their applications for areas of timber lands, so that in the event of the reserves reverting to the Crown they would have a preferential right to timber growing on lands adjacent to such mills.

Railway Tariff.

We find that, by the extension of roads and railways, the bush-lands of the colony have now been made so accessible that it has had the effect of inducing a number of persons to embark in the timber industry, until it has now become a battle for existence; and unless something be done as early as possible to find new markets for the increased production a number of the weakest mill-owners will be compelled to give up the contest, thereby entailing a very serious loss upon themselves and the colony. With a view of removing this undesirable state of affairs it is proposed to try foreign markets. In entering upon this business it is patent that a good article must be produced, and at the lowest price possible, to enable us to obtain an opening. We feel sure that the Government will give us every assistance in their power in what we have no hesitation in saying is the most important industry in the colony. From the nature of the article of our manufacture, freight and wharfage dues enter very largely into the cost. Seeing the very large interest at stake, we very respectfully ask the Government to help us in this matter by carrying all timber, including white-pine for butter-boxes, &c., manufactured in the colony for export from the colony, under Classes F or Q of the railway regulations, and also by granting a reduction of jetty dues wherever such are under Government control. We also beg to call your attention to the very high rates charged to inland stations in contrast to places which have the advantage of water-carriage in competition with the railways. The increased price to inland stations no doubt tends very considerably to lessen local consumption. We would also remind the Government that they do no loading or unloading, take no responsibility whatever, no covers or covered wagons required, unless for seasoned and manufactured timbers. We also beg to call your attention to the very unfair regulation under which rusticated weatherboards, tongued-and-grooved flooring and lining, and timber of irregular width and thickness are measured.

We also find that before we can hope for any success to be obtained in exporting timber to foreign countries it must be thoroughly seasoned, and to do this a very considerable outlay has to be incurred for drying-sheds. To partially recoup sawmillers for this large outlay we suggest that timber so treated should be carried under Class Q.

We also recommend that where green timber has to be railed to drying-sheds, the charges be held over until the timber is removed from the sheds for export.

That the Government be requested to retain a sufficient number of flat trucks for the timber business, as being the most convenient for loading.

Local Timber Trade.

Recommended, That the Government be requested to establish a Timber Industry Board, with annual sittings in Wellington, such Board to consist of delegates from sawmillers and timber merchants, and also one or more representatives of the Government. The constitution of this Board would greatly stimulate the formation of local associations in the various timber districts, thereby bringing all engaged in the industry in close touch with the Government and with one another.

That, whereas sawmillers in many cases experience great difficulties in obtaining tramway rights along public roads and through private lands, the Government be requested to introduce a measure dealing with the matter, and in the case of Crown lands extending the present term of five years to twenty-one years if required, and that any future sales of Crown lands likely to be effected should be made subject to tramway rights.

The various sizes of timber specified by different architects and builders is a source of great loss to the sawmillers, and we would suggest that a conference of architects be called to determine a stock list of sizes of timber, and we would also suggest that the sawmillers at the present Conference take steps to obtain uniform patterns of flooring and lining.

Recommended, That, with a view to the introduction of improved machinery, steps be taken to obtain and distribute among sawmillers all information relating to same.

Recommended, That the Government be advised to admit all sawmilling machinery duty-free.

HENRY W. SMITH, Chairman.