

15. That, further, your petitioners have been advised by counsel that the licenses of the said H. A. Massey to the areas and reserves have long since expired, and, acting under legal advice, they have made repeated applications for sawmill licenses and other privileges in and over the said areas and reserves. That all of the said applications have been either refused or declined consideration on the ground that "the areas and reserves are already held by Mr. Massey under a good title."

16. That your petitioners have recently moved the Supreme Court in Dunedin to review the decision of the Commissioner of State Forests in this respect; but the Court decided it had no jurisdiction in the matter, on the ground that the discretion of the Commissioner was absolute.

17. That the State Forests Act, 1885, does not enable your petitioners to appeal against the decision of the Commissioner of State Forests given by virtue of the powers reposed in him by the said Act.

18. That your petitioners verily believe the interpretation placed on the State Forests Regulations, 1886, by counsel consulted by them is the correct interpretation, and that being so, consider they are placed under serious disability by being denied the common right of British subjects to have legal questions decided by the authorized Courts of the Dominion.

19. That under the regulations of 1900 certain further areas and reserves, to wit, areas in Spar Bush Forest, have been granted to H. A. Massey, and your petitioners claim there can be no question that these titles have expired by effluxion of time, but the Commissioner of State Forests has ruled that H. A. Massey still holds the same under a good title, and against his decision no appeal is allowed.

20. That in addition to the regulations made by the Governor in Council under the authority of the State Forests Act, 1885, regulations were made under the authority of the Land Act, 1892, in 1900 and 1905, and under the authority of the Land Act, 1908, in 1909. Under these regulations numerous licenses have been granted, and although the Land Act, 1892, and the Land Act, 1908, distinctly limit the area to be held at 800 acres, several such areas, and even larger areas, have been granted at one time to the same person or firm, thus perpetuating the monopoly created under the regulations of 1886 to the disadvantage of a majority of persons engaged in the sawmilling trade in the District of Southland.

21. That your petitioners pray your honourable House will be pleased—

(a.) To order a searching inquiry into the allegations contained in this their petition.

(b.) To amend the Act to enable an appeal to the Supreme Court upon the question of the interpretation of the State Forest Regulations of 1886 and subsequent regulations made under the authority of the State Forests Act, 1885; and the validity of the titles of H. A. Massey held thereunder.

(c.) To amend the State Forests Act, 1908, so as to provide for an appeal to the Supreme Court in all future cases where any person may consider himself aggrieved by any decision given under the authority of the Act.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

A. R. WALLIS, Sawmiller, Grove Bush, Southland, and 24 others.

Dunedin, 1st August, 1912.