

SAWMILLING SECTION.

[This Section is published by arrangement with the Dominion Federated Sawmillers' Association (Incorp.) in the interests of the Sawmilling Industry of N.Z.]

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We publish in another column copy of a press association telegram emanating from Hokitika, with regard to the timber regulations as they affect Westland, which were fully discussed at a meeting of the Westland County Council on the 10th June. It appears that the local bodies in that district have derived a considerable revenue from the cutting out of timber areas, and that if the policy of the Forestry Commissioner is carried out, and large areas are proclaimed as forest reserves, this revenue will be greatly diminished. Strong objection was taken by various speakers to the manner in which the legislation was put through the House in the dying hours of the session without any discussion or sufficient explanation of the principles involved; and having regard to a distinct promise given by Mr. Massey that the royalties would not be taken from the local bodies, the action of the Hon. the Minister of Forests in pushing through the legislation referred to, in the face of this promise, gazetting Orders-in-Council in the absence of the Prime Minister is strongly resented. It was resolved that delegates be appointed to give evidence before Parliament and that all constitutional means be taken to rescind the legislation as it now stands. It was also further resolved to invite the Hon. Sir Francis Bell to visit Westland and meet the Council, and this we understand the latter has agreed to do.

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The housing problem becomes more acute daily, and although the initial step has been taken calling for applications for the approval of the allotment of 200 dwellings—this is a mere drop in the bucket—Christchurch alone is short of 1000 dwellings and Wellington and Auckland many more, besides all the small inland towns throughout the Dominion.

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The dislocation of the railway service comes along at a most inopportune time, for, besides throwing many men out of work at the country mills, it will retard building in the towns, and so carpenters and allied tradesmen, will also be idle. A deputation from the Sawmillers' Federation waited upon the General Manager of Railways in connection with the carriage of timber, but he could give no promise that the traffic would be resumed until greater stocks of coal were in sight, and that timber was not classified as a necessity. The position of industries dependent upon coal, and the refusal or inability of the railways to carry the product of such a large industry as timber, must react upon

the whole community, and the position appears to become more chaotic and involved, in place of being straightened out as we had fondly hoped at the signing of the Peace Treaty.

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The Timber Workers' Federation has just concluded its annual meeting and amongst the resolutions arrived at we notice the following, viz:— (1.) Inspection of tram lines, bridges, and timber stacks by a Government inspector; (2.) more rigid inspection of machinery in country sawmills; (3.) Workers' Compensation Act to be amended so as to increase allowance to dependants in case of death to £1000. Full medical fees and full pay during period of incapacity; (4.) Government to take over all accident insurance as a State monopoly, and employers compelled to insure workers in the State office; (5.) a forty-four hour week for all industries; (6.) a "mill-to-mill" payment clause, similar to "bank-to-bank" miners' clause—involving payment of bush hands from the time of leaving the mill till their return; (7.) better accommodation for sawmill workers in the matter of houses, baths, drying rooms, etc.

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A deputation subsequently waited upon the Hons. the Acting-Prime Minister, Herries, and W. D. S. MacDonald, and claimed that the restrictions imposed on the industry might affect the workers more seriously than the employers, and that the worker or his representative should have a place on the Advisory Committee of the Board of Trade; that if timber is regulated in price, so should all farm produce, meat, butter, etc. The latter argument has a deal to commend it, especially after the cessation of war conditions and regulations that were originally intended to lapse after the declaration of peace. A further suggestion made by the deputation was in the direction of restricting the importation of oregon pine excepting in large sizes.

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It is needless to point out that restriction of hours worked per week, means less efficiency and increased cost, whereas more intensive work and greater output of all of our industries should be our aim and object, if we are to hold our own in the industrial world. No one in his senses would advocate reasonable leisure and rest from work in order to cultivate the higher ideals of life, but who shall say that forty-eight hours a week is too much of a tax on our energies? It would appear as if a school of political economy ought to be established