

Mr. Swanson.
2nd Sept., 1873.

8. What is the longest distance they drive timber down? I do not think anything like twenty miles. I have not seen any timber driven that distance. In many cases months may elapse before a fresh comes sufficient to bring down the logs. It sometimes may happen that a man may take a license, and cut down the nearest trees in the bush, and then roll them into the creek to be brought down by the first fresh. When the logs are driven down they may be left aground on land belonging to a different owner.

9. *Mr. Rolleston.*] Would it not be practicable to take the mills up to the forests, and bring the timber down cut? They are doing that in some cases; it is the best plan where practicable. This system of driving, however, was so cheap, and answered the purpose so well for the owner of the timber, that it was the plan generally adopted.

10. *The Chairman.*] What is the average size of these streams? The streams on which dams were erected were generally small streams, and the dam made to aid the natural rise of the water; and when these dams were filled the water was let go by opening the gate.

11. *Mr. Rolleston.*] As a rule, you think that tramways could be constructed so as to get out the timber? Yes; I am satisfied the timber could be got out by tramways. I believe that tramways would ultimately be far more profitable; they would certainly be more profitable to the country, and far more timber would be got out by their means.

12. *Mr. Gillies.*] Is not timber now cut in places where they could not take tramways to bring it out? I have never yet seen the place where a tramway could not be taken, if there was timber enough to make it worth while. I can easily understand that there may be little patches here and there which it would not be worth while to take a tramway to; but if there is plenty of timber, it will pay to get it out by a tramway, and infinitely more will be taken out.

13. *The Chairman.*] It has been suggested to alter the Bill so that no one should have a right to float timber without a license from the Superintendent; that the Superintendent should declare a creek subject to the provisions of the Act; that before licenses were issued regulations should be made; and that persons holding licenses should deposit security to cover any damage that might be done to existing holders; and finally, that an easy remedy should be given to persons having property on the stream. How do you think that would act? When a man commences cutting, he might not be able to do damage to the extent of sixpence. But farmers, wool scourers, tanners, and other businesses of that sort may be established, and his stakes would have to be increased with every one who came below him, and with everything they did. A farmer might come below him, and in a single night the whole of his soil might be washed away.

14. Are there not creeks which might be used for this purpose which are not available for agricultural purposes? There may be. Mr. Henderson bought his creek from head to foot, so as to prevent any claims from persons below where he cut his timber.

15. *Mr. Gillies.*] At those saw-mills of Captain Daldy at Waikawau, at Cabbage Bay, and at other creeks on the Coromandel Peninsula, there is very little flat land which could be used for agricultural purposes? I do not know much of those places. It seems to me that the fair way would be to treat these mill-owners precisely as any company would be treated, and let them give notice to the owners of property on the banks of the streams they wish to use. This is a matter I considered years ago, and we tried to get a measure passed so that for the future forests would be sold with these rights. The Provincial Solicitor, Mr. Wynn, was quite willing to go into the matter, but we found that much more would be lost than would be gained. The obstacle was not so much the mischief which would be done as the good which would be prevented, as all operations below would be paralyzed. Any deposit that would be put down would remain stationary, while all manner of improvements would be increasing. A large bush would fetch much more if sold with these rights; but the land below would fetch a great deal less. I think these mill-owners ought to be put in the same position as private companies, and if they want these rights in regard to particular creeks, let them come to the Assembly or to the Provincial Council and seek for them, after having given due notice to the parties whose rights are affected, and giving them the opportunity of opposing. I am perfectly satisfied that those residing on creeks where no harm could be done would not object, or would be very easily settled with.

16. *Mr. Kelly.*] A man might acquire an acre on a creek and prevent any person from taking timber down? If the Government give a man rights, then the company would have to buy him out under an arbitration as to value.

17. Suppose that no injury was done to him? Then he would have no claim for compensation. A man may have his house near one of these creeks, and there may be above a "jam" of logs, which will be a perpetual source of terror for months. A fresh may come at any time, night or day, and sweep away the house, or any crop he may have on the land, especially if it is cut; and there is no protection in this Bill. This Bill ought to have been circulated through the Provinces to give a chance to those interested in the banks of the creeks of petitioning against it.

18. *Mr. Rolleston.*] Would you say it was a question of capital, and that for a man of capital it would be a more economical and better way to get the timber out by a tramway? Yes; and it would certainly be better for the country, as much more would be got out. The timber would not then have to lie in the creeks for months, sometimes for years, rotting; it would be cut only when it was wanted, and in such lengths as were wanted; and much of the tops of the trees, which are now wasted, could be used. I am aware that timber has been and is now being got out by means of a tramway. Mr. Gibbons has a mill on one of the Education Reserves, and he is now making a tramway to bring the timber out by, and on this tramway there is a tunnel. By this a large quantity of timber will be made available. Mr. Gibbons is a man who thoroughly understands his business.

19. If the suggestions that have been made were embodied in the Act, do you think people would be able to avail themselves of them? A man might buy a piece of land on which the fern was growing, and where, so long as that was the case, but little damage could be done, but after he had ploughed it, the soil might be carried away altogether, or the crop, if one was on the ground and not secured. The deposit, which might have been ample when the man took out the license to cut the timber, would be quite insufficient, or would require to be continually changing with every day's work, and every pound of expenditure on the part of the owners of the creek below. When I went on to the creek