

upon the sale to a working man of a pair of boots which proved incapable of standing the rough work of the settlement, which boots, it casually transpired, were woman's boots and sold at 12s. 6d.

There may be in the pages of evidence a few other statements which appear to be of the nature of complaints against the Resident Agent, but we think they will be found either too vague or trifling to require notice, or to be bare assertions of incidents or conversations, which from length of time can neither be trusted nor disproved, or else they fall into the category of matters discussed under more general headings.

We may now state that the following conclusions are, in our opinion, well established :—

1. That the settlement was formed by public authority, on public grounds, for public purposes, and was not in any sense a scheme got up for the promotion of the interests of one or two persons.

2. That there is no evidence whatever to support the charges of jobbery and speculation made against the managers of the settlement, but that such charges have been disproved, so far as it is reasonable to expect proof of a negative in such cases, and that not the smallest ground has been shown for the insinuations so often made that more regard was shown for the profits of the "Waipara" than the welfare of the settlement.

3. That, of the numerous charges brought against the Resident Agent, some are simply false and slanderous, some misdirected and pointless, and some merely petty and personal. He has had troublesome and thankless duties to perform, and all the spleen of the settlement, the discontent of some, and the rancorous animosity of others have been directed against him. But in his capacity as Resident Agent he has acquitted himself with adequate intelligence and ability, and with unimpeachable zeal, integrity, and humanity.

*Prejudice against Settlement.*—The fact that the settlement has proved, to a great extent, a failure, is of itself sufficient to account for the greater part of the constant attacks that have been made upon its managers; but the unusual virulence of these attacks is, we think, partly explained by the fact that the scheme has from the beginning had its enemies, who did not desire its success, and who by constant disparagement, which although possibly honest was certainly prejudiced, have contributed something to its failure. There is no doubt that many persons have contemplated with dislike the possibility of the realization of the aims of the promoters of the southern settlement, apprehending that its success would be injurious to the older places on the coast. It has been supposed that Jackson's Bay would become the port of call for the Melbourne steamers, and that the trade and business of Hokitika would be injured; and this feeling has been so strong that we think it impossible, without some reference to it, fully to explain the animus which has been infused into the criticisms which have been made upon the scheme.

*Present Condition of Settlement.*—From the consideration of personal charges and complaints, we now proceed to the less tedious office of giving some account of the present state of the settlement, of the causes which have led to that state, and of the means by which it may be remedied.

Of the present condition of the settlement we have enabled ourselves to speak by a personal visit to every part of it, and by the most careful observation which, as visitors not pretending to be experts, we were able to make, of the natural features of the place, the harbour and the rivers, the forests, the soil, and the sections which had been allotted to settlers, and the work done upon them. Immediately upon our arrival at the Bay we visited the Smoothwater Settlement, which is within an easy distance of the landing; and the next day we proceeded to the Haast, which is the northern boundary of the special settlement block of 60,000 acres. From the Haast we returned to the Bay, stopping to see everything of importance on our way, and walking through the settlements that had been laid off at different centres. We have thus seen all that has actually been done in the way of improving the land at the Haast; the Okuru Settlement, with its three rivers; the Waiatoto; and the Arawata; and have been able to form some opinion as to the reasons why those places have been so largely abandoned.

*Smoothwater.*—The Smoothwater Settlement is totally deserted, and its aspect is certainly very desolate and discouraging. There is a good foot-track to this place from the bay, and the visitor who follows this will come upon clearing after clearing upon one or the other bank of the stream that winds through the valley, each clearing having its cottage, with or without its garden and outbuildings, but all alike deserted and dismal. The most obvious cause of the desertion of these homesteads, which at once presents itself to the notice of the casual observer, is the flooding of the river, of which the indications are evident. But it is equally evident that this evil has been very much aggravated by the extreme recklessness with which the settlers have felled the timber into the river. With a very winding stream running through a valley which it easily overflows, it is of course of the utmost importance to keep the channel unimpeded; but where at every bend of the river a dam is formed by trees of all sizes, it must follow that many floods will be caused which would never otherwise have happened, and that inevitable floods must be greatly increased and prolonged. This is the same kind of reckless imprudence as that which leads the holders of ground on the larger rivers of this coast to begin their operations by cutting down all the trees close to the river, although the most ordinary use of their eyes might show them that by this means the ground which would otherwise well reward their cultivation will very soon be converted into a waste of stones. The Smoothwater settlers had so many unavoidable difficulties to contend with, and some of them did so much good work, that we could not help regretting that by want of forethought they should have contributed so much to their own failure.

The selection of Smoothwater as a site for settlement appears to have been due to the recommendation of Mr. Browning, one of the surveyors, who, in exploring the country, had occasion to traverse this valley. He was favourably impressed with its appearance, and thought there were 5,000 acres of land available for settlement. This estimate was far too high, the true area being about 1,600 acres, and the other features of the place were such that had Mr. Browning duly considered them, he would perhaps have modified his recommendation. The good land is too small in quantity, and too much confined to a narrow strip along the river-bank, to admit of being cut up with advantage into 50-acre sections. This course was however adopted, and the sections were eagerly taken up, and many of them, after maturer inspection, abandoned. But those who remained were the means of inducing their countrymen, Germans and Poles, who arrived afterwards, to take up their sections there also. This they