

At the Woodlands Company's mill, timber of all sizes down even to 6 in. diameter is cut. Other mills visited were two owned by Messrs. McCallum and Usher; also Twopany's.

From Mr. H. A. Massey, of Invercargill, I obtained much valuable information as to the treatment and habitat of various timbers in this district.

Leaving Invercargill on the 4th September, and travelling *via* Riverton to Orepuki, I inspected Watson's mill, Wakapatu, and Perry's; also, at Colac, the Pine Company's and Fisher's. The timber here is patchy, but there is a considerable quantity of good rimu. The output of the Pine Company's mills is above 600,000 superficial feet per month in this district; and for the whole of Southland, 20,000,000 ft. per annum.

A rough-looking tree of small size—the kowhai, sometimes called "goai," probably a corruption of the Maori name—is met with here. Its timber is tough and durable, much sought after, and extensively used for fencing-posts. Totara is the most durable of timbers in this locality, but the trees are very limited in number, and small in size. The three beeches, *F. solandri*, *F. menziesii*, and *F. fusca*, are also represented in these forests. Another tree, resembling the beech, with large toothed leaf—the kahmai (? kamahi, Kirk)—is also found, and is extensively used for sleepers and fencing, for which purposes it is held in high esteem as specially tough and durable.

Leaving Invercargill for Dunedin and Christchurch on the 5th September, I visited, on the 8th, the Stockton Railway Department Nursery with the local District Engineer, to whom I was indebted for much courtesy and kindness during my stay.

The next day was devoted to the plantations in this neighbourhood alone, where I succeeded in getting much valuable information.

I also visited the Lincoln Agricultural College, and was most courteously received and shown over the grounds, and inspected the stock, trees, &c., and I need hardly say I was delighted with the college and its environment, and take this opportunity of thanking the Principal for his kind attention, hospitality, &c.

On the 10th September I completed my inspection of the forests in the South, and left Christchurch for Wellington.

FORESTS OF THE NORTH ISLAND.

Leaving Wellington on the 14th September by train I reached Wanganui, on the beautiful river of the same name, and after a delightful passage up the most picturesque stream in Australasia, arrived at Pipiriki, passing on the way numerous Native villages.

Starting thence on horseback (16th September), with a guide (G. Manson), kindly arranged for by the District Road Engineer, I travelled for the next four days, inspecting various forests under conditions of great difficulty, personal discomfort, and on several occasions considerable danger; the weather, which during the previous portion of my tour had been everything we could desire, having now changed, and drenching rains were pouring down incessantly. No way daunted, however, we pressed on through scenes indescribably charming, in the majestic beauty of the gorges and the wild weird grandeur of the mountains. The prevailing geological formation here is papa, which may be described as a soft volcanic mud rock.

Though I had passed through the Buller district and the Otira Gorges, and been impressed with the marvellous engineering skill which had constructed practicable roads over their perilous passes, rivers, and precipices, and the dexterity of the coachman who could travel safely over them, here, on the borders of the King-country, I had to trust to my own horsemanship to surmount the perils of roads far and away worse than any in the South Island. At this season of the year, too, no driver who ever handled the ribbons could get a coach through on these terrible roads. The waters cut new courses on every side through the rotten papa, as clearly defined as if with a knife, and the traveller is frequently brought face to face, at a moment's notice, with glimpses of a fairyland of ferns and shrubs, while hundreds of feet below can be heard the thunderous roar of falling waters.

My guide, with a confidence which speaks volumes for his acquaintance with the country, plunges downwards, and I follow, my heart in my mouth.

As originally cut, some years since, the track here was 8ft. wide, but neglect and flood-waters have so altered it that gaps appear every few yards, and heaps of mullock have to be negotiated, while precipices at every turn seem to beckon us to take shorter routes and end our journey and miseries at the same time by taking a leap into the awful chasms we are skirting.

The rain pitilessly drenched us all along, and under these depressing conditions we continued our journey, crossing a bridge which caused one to wonder how the heavy timber used in its construction could have been brought to the spot and placed in position over such a fearful gorge.

The hills, though not very high, are precipitous, especially on the side where the main creeks rush down to the Wanganui, here not far distant.

The trees in this locality are of fair size, rimu, white-pine, and matai. Here, too, for the first time in the North Island, I found the cedar (*kaikawaka*, but known in the South as *kawaka*).

At a road-makers' camp, which we found at this stage of our journey, we were fortunate enough to get some tea and other bush delicacies, and my attention was called to a hut built some eight years before of *kaikawaka* slabs, and shingled with a mixture of that timber and white-pine. The pine was rotten through and through, but the *kaikawaka*, or cedar, of which very fine trees are found here, was as sound as on the day when it was cut.

From Pipiriki our first stage was to the small bush hamlet of Raetihi. Continuing our journey next day, we toiled for twelve miles through such mud as I have never seen before. I had early experience of the track from Strachan to Mount Lyell, in Tasmania, before the success of the latter as a mining district led to a better condition of things, but, bad as that was, it was nothing like Field's Track from Raetihi to Waimarino. The rain, too, evidently meant business, and my guide became uneasy as to the state of rivers and creeks ahead of us. On both sides of the track there is fine timber, including rimu, totara, white-pine, *kaikawaka*, matai, and miro.