

mantle seven inches deep was laid across the heart of Christchurch and in some districts the layer was from twelve to fourteen inches deep. In New Zealand snow is rare at sea level, particularly in the North Island, but on the summits of the ranges in the whole length of the South Island and on the highest peaks in the North Island snow falls, on the average, on about thirty days a year, while in the interior of the South Island the average is in the vicinity of half that number. The "hail area" of the Dominion is that around Foveaux Strait and the south-west of the South Island, where the greatest number of hailstorms are recorded each year. On the other hand, thunderstorms are more numerous in the North Island than in the South.

Wellington, as every New Zealander knows, is the windiest city or town in the Dominion, due principally to its position on Cook Strait. Observations taken over a number of years show that the average number of days in a year when the wind has been reported as reaching gale force is twenty-one at Wellington, twenty at Invercargill, fifteen at New Plymouth, fourteen at Auckland, ten at Dunedin, seven at Christchurch, and two over on the West Coast at Hokitika. Anemometer records reveal that the average number of days on which there is at least one gust of wind exceeding forty miles per hour is 137 at Kelburn, Wellington, thirty-four at Hobsonville, Auckland, and thirty at Wigram, Christchurch. One of the windiest spots on earth is Mount Washington, New Hampshire, United States, where observers at the weather observatory on the summit of the mountain recorded a wind gust at the rate of 231 miles per hour on April 12, 1934.

The influence of the prevailing westerly wind, coupled with the height and continuity of the mountain ranges, on New Zealand's rainfall figures is most evident from a study of records

taken over a period of years. These place the average number of days on which rain fell in any one year at 223 for Half Moon Bay, 187 for Hokitika and New Plymouth, 183 for Auckland and 165 for Wellington. On the other side of the picture, Clyde has 77 wet days in an average year, Blenheim 102, Napier 113, and Christchurch 125.

A similar answer is reached by examining the sunshine statistics of the Dominion; the greatest amounts are recorded at places protected from the prevailing winds by high mountain ranges. The long-standing issue of which is New Zealand's sunniest spot is settled by the official records, which show that over a period of nineteen years Nelson basked under an average of 2,509 hours of sunshine each year. Napier regards it as an off year when it does not attain its average of 2,415 hours, a figure calculated over a period of thirty-three years. Next in order come Lake Tekapo (2,409), Tauranga (2,368), Blenheim (2,304), New Plymouth (2,247), Wellington (2,050), Rotorua (2,046), Auckland (2,032), Christchurch (1,966), and Hokitika (1918).

The widest range of temperature which New Zealand official records show is that of the Hanmer Springs station, which has experienced temperatures as low as 8.2 degrees Fahrenheit and as high as 97 degrees. Timaru is credited with having once recorded a shade temperature of 99 degrees, with Rotorua making a strong challenge to this record with a reading of 98 degrees. Temperatures of 90 degrees or over have been experienced at various times at such observing stations as Tauranga, Hamilton, Napier, Masterton, Nelson, Blenheim, Lake Coleridge, Christchurch, Queenstown, Alexandra, Dunedin, and Invercargill.

But Greenland Ranch, California, still boasts a margin of a mere 35 degrees over any New Zealand record!