

During my Otago inspection I was met by Messrs. Bolton and Hughan, whose duties are partly those of Forest Rangers, and who afforded me all the information and assistance in their power. Mr. Valpy, the Ranger in the North-East District, I did not see; but it was only after I had left Dunedin for the South that I gathered from a reperusal of the papers relating to forest matters, laid before the House in 1874, that there were any Rangers employed under the late Provincial Government. A reservation of the comparatively small area of forest remaining undisposed of in Otago proper, and of a certain proportion in Southland, the gradual disposal of the rest of the Southland forests to the best advantage, and judicious planting in the gold field and lake districts, appear to me the requirements of this provincial district in the shape of forestry.

Westland.

8. I entered Westland from the Canterbury side, and purposed spending some days between the Otira Gorge and Hokitika, but unfortunately the weather was so unfavourable that this was out of the question, and I had to take the coach, which got through just before the road was washed away, and traffic interrupted for several days in January. I could, therefore, only observe, in passing, the luxuriant growth of the rata (*M. lucida*) in the Otira Gorge, and note fine forests of black, red, and white pine and pokako (*E. Hookerianus*) in the vicinity of the Taipo River, on the western side of which the forest of *Fagus fusca* and white pine appeared exceptionally good.

At Hokitika I received much information and every assistance and attention from Mr. Bonar, and endeavoured to see as much as possible, although the original plan of inspection had to be departed from owing to the want of a steamer.

Had the "Wanaka," which was on an excursion trip round the island, not been detained, I should probably, on Mr. Bonar's suggestion, have gone by her to Jackson's Bay, and found my way back overland, although the time at my disposal was rather short, especially as the weather was most unfavourable throughout my stay on the West Coast, and rendered the risk of detention for indefinite periods, from floods in the rivers, and washing away of roads, very great. As it was, the detention of the "Wanaka" at Nelson rendered the trip out of the question, and Mr. Kirk and I were obliged to limit our visits, in great measure, to the forests in the neighbourhood of Hokitika, which we visited in every direction, and collected information from the saw-millers and others connected with the timber trade. We also proceeded to Ross and the southern branch of the Waitahi River, examining the forests on its banks, and those of the Mikonui, further north. Between those two rivers there is some very fine black and white pine, and on the northern branch of the Waitahi a fine young growth of totara, which I was glad to learn is comparatively abundant, of large dimensions, further south. The natural re-growth of young red pine was also very abundant, and would, I am sure, have convinced the most sceptical that this species, as well as others, could be treated under a system of natural reproduction with the best results.

Returning to Hokitika, I had an interview with Mr. FitzGerald, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and settled generally the main principles of forest conservancy as applicable to this heavily timbered district, should my proposals meet with approval. These were also discussed with Mr. Bonar, and we arrived, on the whole, at satisfactory conclusions.

I then went, by the inland route, to the Grey, passing through somewhat inferior forest of white, red, and silver pine, the latter in considerable quantity. After crossing the Teremakau River the beech appears in some quantity, and we found Hooker's *Dracophyllum uniflorum*, which I had not before seen. The most noticeable feature which we observed throughout the forests of this province is the presence of an undescribed *Dacrydium*, affording timber of much commercial value, which has hitherto only been locally known under the designation of white silver pine. This valuable pine is described in Mr. Kirk's memorandum under the name of *D. Westlandicum*, or the Westland pine, retaining the term of silver pine for *D. intermedium*, a species originally discovered on the Great Barrier Island by Mr. Kirk, but now described for the first time, which yields a timber similar in quality, somewhat darker in colour.

After a visit to the Brunner coal mines, and forests in the neighbourhood, we left the Westland district for Reefton, *via* the Arnold River and Ahaura.

Nelson.

9. I entered the Nelson Provincial District from Westland *via* the Grey, and proceeded during heavy floods, which greatly impeded progress and inspection of the forests, to Reefton. All the way from the Arnold River, the Westland boundary, our route lay through heavy forest, consisting at first chiefly of black, white, red, and silver pines, some of the former being very fine; but soon the silver pines disappear, and the others gradually gave place to beech forest as we proceeded, till, just after passing Square Town, we passed through the finest tract of pure beech forest (chiefly *F. fusca*) I think I have seen in the colony.

Our route next lay from Reefton along the valley of the Inangahua River to Lyell, through heavy forest, chiefly beech, with pine in the low-lying localities.

From Lyell we proceeded up the Buller to its junction with the Hope, and thence across the Hope Saddle and Spooner's Range to Foxhill and Nelson. The timber in the Buller Valley is chiefly beech (*F. fusca*) and black and white pine, attaining large dimensions in the lowlands (where there is also some totara), which are however of no great extent, but becoming poor and stunted a few yards up the hill side. The hills throughout this locality are very steep and shingly, and the intervening valleys narrow. Great care must therefore be taken with regard to the timber; extensive reserves will be required; and, except low down in the valleys, the system known as selection felling should alone be adopted. At present any one seems to be allowed to take possession and clear land for which he may have applied, without any permission to do so—a system which, if not put a stop to in time, cannot fail to lead to disastrous results. The same remarks apply generally to the Hope Valley and the large extent of forest, much of which is of little or no commercial value, in this neighbourhood. Ascending to the Hope Saddle the forest naturally becomes stunted and scrubby, but I noticed a great deal of young totara, though no old trees appeared left, a similar coincidence having been observed on the