

of Blue Mountain, and a number of flat spurs on the eastern side. Formerly the bush extended over a large area of flat where the Township of Tapanui now stands. This flat carried some magnificent timber, but it was all taken out by sawmillers, leaving now only the less valuable and more inaccessible portions. On the eastern side of Blue Mountain there is a fairly large area of practically virgin forest, consisting solely of birch. A sawmill started there last year on a licensed area, but, as there is considerable difficulty in getting away the timber, owing to bad roads, it is yet somewhat doubtful as to whether or not the venture will be successful.

The forest around the lakes consists chiefly of birch; and large quantities of timber, posts, and firewood have been taken from it in the past. The country generally is rough and steep, and systematic milling is not now being carried on to any extent.

The Catlin's Forest covers a very large area, and the bush is of a varied description all through. Sawmilling has been carried on for some thirty to thirty-five years, and at the present day the Catlin's district is producing large quantities of rimu, matai, kahikatea, &c., for building purposes; kowhai, broadleaf, and totara, for fencing; and manuka, matai, &c., for firewood. There are not any extensive areas of any particular species of timber except kamahi. On some areas all kinds may be found in equal proportions; some produce larger quantities of rimu, with other timbers in smaller proportion; some, again, may contain a majority of matais, and so on: but no areas have been found to contain exclusively rimu, or matai, or totara, &c. Kamahi, however, is found exclusively on some fairly large areas.

VARIETIES OF TIMBER-TREES.

1. *Kauri* is not found in Otago.

2. *Totara* was originally found in fairly large quantities in Catlin's and Glenomaru Survey Districts, and in smaller quantities throughout the remainder of the Catlin's Forest, in Waipori Bush, and in the lakes districts. It was extensively used for building both houses and bridges, and also largely used for telegraph-poles and railway-sleepers until the supply began to run short. At the present time it is rather difficult to get in anything like large quantities, and is consequently very dear. It is still used to some extent for building, particularly in window-sills, door-frames, &c., and also in building bridges. All that can be obtained can be used in building—in fact, the demand for that purpose is quite equal to the supply.

4. *Matai* is to be obtained in large quantities throughout the whole of Catlin's Forest, but it does not exist to any extent in any other part of Otago. It is largely used in house-building as studs, flooring, &c., and to some extent in bridge-building. The trunks and limbs unfit for sawing are split into posts for fencing, and the still smaller parts make splendid firewood. The matai grows to a very fair girth, but as a rule the tree becomes branchy at a short distance from the ground, making it difficult to get logs of any great length. The wood is hard and durable, and, when used for fencing in anything of a dry soil, it has been known to last for many years. A well-developed matai is really a handsome tree. Breaking out from a main trunk at 16 ft. to 20 ft. from the ground, its wide-spreading branches and close green foliage give it a very commanding appearance. It is generally recognised that where matai is plentiful the land is of good quality, and intending selectors are often guided by it in making their selections. It is only a matter of a short time when all the matai will be used for fencing and building, and to introduce any other means of using it would be to hasten the end of a timber that is now most valuable for the purposes previously mentioned. (*Vide* photograph opposite page 57.)

8. *Southern Manoa* is generally known in Otago as "bog-pine." It is very scarce, and does not appear at all in the Catlin's Bush. There are a few trees in a small bush at Mount Cargill, near Dunedin, and the only use it is put to is as fire-wood.

12. *Tawhai raunui* (Red-beech) is found only in the lakes district, in Otago, where it grows to a great size. Its wood is hard and durable, and it is used chiefly for fencing. Owing to its durability it has proved itself to have great lasting-power as fencing-posts. When the lake forests were more accessible, and the trees larger and more plentiful, large quantities were sawn; but sawmilling has now become more or less a thing of the past, and the small quantity of timber left is of great value to the local people as a means of supply of fencing-material.

20. *The Southern Rata* grows freely in the Catlin's Forest, but it is not found to any extent in any other part of Otago. It is really the beauty tree of the Otago forest—its beautiful red flowers, so plentiful, and so striking in appearance, are a slight worth going far to see. It is in full bloom in ordinary years about the month of January. The rata attains great size, but the trunk is usually very gnarled and twisted. The branches strike out from near the ground, and often extend to a great distance, causing a full-grown tree to occupy a considerable space. It is sometimes known locally as the New Zealand ironwood, owing to its extreme hardness. It is used for making fencing-droppers, hand-mauls for pile-driving, and other uses requiring extra hard timber; but, though I have heard of its having been used for making wheels, I have never seen wheels made of it. Experiment would probably prove that it would be an excellent wood for making heavy wheels and also for making ribs for boats. There is a fairly large quantity of this timber in the Catlin's Forest; but, as the trees consist chiefly of very short trunks and very long and numerous limbs, it is difficult to convey any idea of its quantity in superficial feet.

24. *Kowhai* does not grow to so large a size as many other of the timber-trees—25 ft. to 40 ft. being its average height, with a trunk varying from 1½ ft. to 2½ ft. through. It is also an exceedingly hard wood, and it is very durable. Standing alone or in groups detached from the forest it is very handsome, and in early spring when its yellow flowers are in full bloom it presents a handsome picture. It is becoming a great favourite as a garden or ornamental tree, and many fine specimens are to be seen in some gardens in Otago. Isolated trees are to be met with even in places that are miles from a forest, and it appears to thrive to best advantage on a sharp soil. In the forest it is generally supposed to indicate good sharp land, and selectors usually accept it as a sign of good soil. Its principal use is posts for