

Mr. Drummond reports :—

“Tuapeka.—I estimate the quantity of land available for agricultural purposes at 22,200 (twenty-two thousand two hundred) acres, situated principally on the flats and spurs of the Tuapeka, Monroe’s, Wetherstone’s, Waitahuna, Waipori, and towards the Tokomairiro and the Molyneux. The soil is generally of a rich black loam with a clay subsoil, and one peculiarity is that it is found equally good on the top of the ranges. As an instance of the fertility of the soil, I may mention that a party has leased from Government four acres for a kitchen garden, situated above Wetherstone’s and at an elevation of, I should imagine, two thousand feet above the sea level, and has cultivated the same with great success.”

111. I have not received any report on this subject from the Mount Ida Gold-field; but as a portion of it was recently selected by the Chief Surveyor for an agricultural “Hundred,” it is no doubt admirably adapted for that purpose. No Report yet received from Mount Ida.

VIII.—FUEL AND TIMBER.

112. The Gold Fields may now be said to be well supplied with fuel. Extensive seams of brown coal (lignite) have been discovered at Gabriel’s, Waipori, Waitahuna, and the Woolshed in the Tuapeka Field; at Butchers’ Creek, near the Teviot; at Manuherikia; at Clyde Township; at Kawarau Junction, the Bannockburn and Conroy’s, on the Dunstan Field; and at Hogburn and Coal Creek on the Mount Ida Field. The price charged for this coal varies from £1 to £1 10s. per ton, delivered at the pit’s mouth. Scrub for firewood is obtainable in most districts, except at the Dunstan, where it is exceedingly scarce. On the Wakatipu, firewood is plentiful. Waipori is supplied with timber for firewood by excavating in the various gullies and flats, where it is met with at a depth of about three feet from the surface. It appears to be a species of pine, and after a few days’ exposure to the air it burns well. Gold Fields well supplied with fuel.

113. The question of the supply of timber for mining, agricultural, and building purposes, is of much importance. It has been supposed that the Otago Gold Fields are destitute of this essential; but the following reports from the various Mining Surveyors will show that ample supplies are everywhere procurable. Timber for mining, agricultural, and building purposes.

114. Mr. Drummond states that a “large bush exists at the head of the Tuapeka, from which timber for mining or building purposes can be had of almost any size, at a distance of about seven or eight miles from the township. Timber is also supplied from the Waipori Bush, which is of very large extent, being about twelve miles long by about one and a half miles broad. The timber is of a large size, some trees being from five to seven feet in diameter. The description of timber is mostly Totara, Birch, Manuka, and black and white Pine. Waitahuna district is supplied with timber from the bush near Table Hill, which is of large extent, and distant from the main gully about five miles. The Woolshed portion of the Waitahuna district is principally supplied from the bush at the head of the Fallaburn, and from the Canada bush. Bush at the head of Tuapeka.

115. Mr. Coates states :—“The absence of timber is, no doubt, a great want upon the Dunstan and Manuherikia districts, but not to the extent which may be at first imagined, as a systematic rafting of timber is being entered into by some parties, who purpose floating timber from the Wanaka Lake, and selling it upon the Dunstan and Mount Benger gold-fields at such reasonable prices as will place it within the reach of all.” Timber being rafted to the Dunstan.

116. The same officer reports that “In the Mount Benger gold-field, the only timber is to be found in some of the deep gullies upon the east slope of the Benger range. Some trees are found fully sixteen inches in diameter at their base; but as this natural growth is limited in extent, and much in use in that neighbourhood, it will no doubt be soon exhausted. Scrub and smaller wood, however, is pretty generally distributed throughout the entire length of that field, and for fuel or agricultural settlement, will afford a lasting supply. Timber on Mount Benger Field.

117. Wakatipu.—Most of the main rivers and creeks are plentifully supplied with timber from extensive patches which occur in almost every gully. A large forest exists at the head of the lake, where saw mills have been erected; and there are many smaller patches in the gullies and on the adjacent banks. Sufficient timber exists in the neighbourhood of the lake to supply a considerable population for many years to come. Supply of timber at Lake Wakatipu.

118. Nokomai, Switzer’s, and Campbell’s are all well supplied with timber; and I am informed by one of the prospectors that timber of considerable size is procurable on the Kyeburn at Mount Ida.

IX. FUTURE PROSPECTS.

119. Of the future of the Otago Gold-fields I am able to speak without reserve or hesitation. Little more than twelve months since, the gold workings were confined to the districts of Gabriel’s, Waitahuna, and Waipori, and little or nothing was known of the geological character of the far interior. A hastily formed idea had taken possession of the public mind, that our Gold Mines were nearly exhausted, and few were sanguine enough, or sufficiently well informed, to believe in the permanence of our auriferous resources. All this is now changed. The discoveries of Future of the Otago Gold Fields.