

weather, exactly the directions concerning which alone fears can be entertained. I may also state that one of the whalers lay in Jackson's Bay for nine months, never lifting the anchor for all that time; that others lay there for two or three months; that the "Mary Ann Annison" lately, during the six weeks' stay at the Bay, rode out several northerly gales with the greatest ease; and that during the "Stella's" stay of three weeks at the Bay a succession of hard blowing from north and north-east was encountered. But, even granted that Jackson's Bay does not fulfil the conditions of a thoroughly safe harbour, there is no other place on the West Coast so favourably situated, and with material so readily to hand for the construction of a good harbour as Jackson's Bay; and as it stands at present there is not a place of refuge, excepting the sounds, which for offering safety to shipping in all weathers could be compared with Jackson's Bay.

Lands.

On several occasions complaints have been made about the quality of the land, and it has been suggested that my report of December, 1874, upon the settlement gave a description not warranted by facts. I maintain that statements made about the land in said report are fully born out by the testimony of the Italian representatives given in their report upon the Okuru and Turnbull lands; by Mr. Woolcock in his report of 1876 upon Arawata suburban and Waitoto rural lands; and by many others. The Commissioners themselves having personally visited and inspected the settlements on the Haast, Okuru, Turnbull, Waitoto, and Arawata Rivers, I need not dwell upon this subject further. Having had, however, a better opportunity of examining the land now the clearings have been effected than I had at the time said report was written, I desire to add that none of the land in our much-praised agricultural district of Hokitika and Kokatahi comes up in quality and depth to the land at Okuru, Turnbull, and Waitoto; the former is poor and sandy as compared with the latter.

The failure of the crops during the last three years is attributable, not to the land nor to the floods, but to the exceeding wet seasons. I append hereto a statement showing the rainfall during the past four years. The average is 134 inches; the maximum was reached in 1878, against which year 155 inches were returned by the meteorological observer. The average number of days on which rain fell is 212 days, and there again 1878 heads the list with 259 rainy days during the year. A somewhat clear conception will be got by comparing the rainfall, &c., on the West Coast with that at other places in the Middle Island. I have selected Christchurch and Dunedin, and the average stands thus: Average number of inches—Christchurch, 26; Dunedin, 39; Hokitika, 134. Average number of days on which rain fell—Christchurch, 140; Dunedin, 147; Hokitika, 212.

The floods, no doubt, also did their share of damage to the crops, but their magnitude and duration is as nothing compared with floods in the best agricultural districts in Australia—the Shoalhaven, Hunter, and other districts; for instance, floods in the rich Sacramento Valley, or even those in New Zealand caused by the Waimakiriri, Molyneux, Taieri, &c. Floods in Jackson's Bay District never last more than a tide—three or four hours generally is their duration. The dividing range at furthest is only eighteen miles from the sea-coast, and any extraordinary fall of rain or sudden melting of snow runs off in a few hours. It is, as I have stated already, the excessive rainfall and wet climate, and not the floods, which will make it all but impossible for Westland ever to become a grain-growing country. But when the land is properly drained and ready outlet for surface-water provided—and with very few of the settlers' clearings is this the case—the land will prove excellent for root crops, and cannot be surpassed for grass-growing. Floods, I may also remark, would be less felt and do less harm if the abominable practice of clearing to the edge of the river-banks were desisted from.

Timber.

Some of the detractors of the settlement have been pleased also to deny the existence of timber for saw-mill purposes, as reported by me in 1874. Since that time a large percentage of the forests suitable for saw-mills have been fixed by actual survey. I attach a plan showing the white pine, red pine, and silver pine forests within the settlement. Most of those streaks and patches of good forest land have been fixed by surveyors while running section or traverse lines, and, as they thus had the best possible opportunity of examining both the land and bush, I thought it advisable to furnish a few extracts from their monthly reports bearing upon the various rivers and localities within the settlement, which are appended to this report. The total area of heavily-timbered land known within the special settlement boundaries amounts to 9,000 acres, but it must be borne in mind that the eastern portion of the settlement block remains as yet unexplored as regards timber for saw-mill purposes. Dealing, however, with what is positively known, and comparing same with the timber land about Hokitika, I beg to draw your attention to the following: Hokitika has exported during the last twelve years timber at the rate of 100,000 feet per week (*vide* Collector of Customs' returns), which—together with the local consumption for building, mining, &c., of 20,000 feet per week (*vide* late Chief Commissioner of Waste Lands' report)—brings the total to seventy-five millions of feet for the twelve years. The total area of forest land from which this supply of timber has been derived is 7,600 acres, distributed as follows:—

	Acre.
Hokitika Borough	600
North of Hokitika to Little Houhou Creek (5 miles)	1,600
East of Hokitika to McKay's Creek (8 miles)	3,200
South of Hokitika towards Mahinapua Lake (6 miles)	2,200
Total	7,600

Computing the Jackson's Bay forest-land, which is fully equal to that around Hokitika, by these data, the supply from the 9,000 acres should be equal to ninety million feet, which means constant work for three mills for twelve years, cutting at the rate of about 50,000 feet per week. I may also point out that, with saw-mills established at Arawata, Waitoto, Hapuka, and Okuru Rivers, the haulage of timber need in no case exceed four miles, whereas at Hokitika it is in some cases six miles and over.