

is the great objection that no school exists at which they could be educated: the few children now in the settlement learn to read and write from their parents, and this must continue until the place is better peopled.

A. BARRON.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

JACKSON'S BAY.

SIR,—

Wellington, 30th January, 1884.

In accordance with your instructions I visited Jackson's Bay on the 23rd instant.

Starting on horseback from Arawata Township in company with Mr. Macfarlane, I rode up the valley of the Arawata as far as occupied, and conversed with every settler who was at home.

Returning along the river-bank, we went by the beach to Waitoto and Okuru, where there are a few settlers, whom I saw. I had not time to visit Smoothwater, but ascended Mount Eleanor, from which the level land, at one time occupied, but now entirely deserted, could be clearly seen.

The people all expressed themselves as able to make a living, and thought they were doing as well there as in any other place.

The level land in the Arawata, Waitoto, and Okuru is of very considerable extent, and seemed to be of better quality, and more easily cleared, than that in Martin's Bay. It is all covered with forest; the roads are good; the settlers appear to be getting on fairly. None of the rivers are bridged, of course, but ferries are established, horses having to swim after the boats. The rivers are very dangerous from their constant shifting, and from the quicksands which form and change so often.

In the Arawata, Mr. Jackson had cleared ten acres out of the seventy held by him; had ten cows milking, and about seventy more in the bush and on a run up the river jointly held with Messrs. Collins and Callery. His garden was very good; in it were the largest cabbages I have seen for a long time.

Messrs. Thomson and McArthur hold forty acres, of which fourteen were cleared, and they had seventeen cattle and a good field of potatoes.

Mr. Callery holds thirty acres, of which about seven were cleared; he had ten cows milking, and forty head on his run up the river. He makes and has ready for export 75lb. of good butter every fortnight.

Mr. Clark occupies fifty acres, has ten acres cleared, and runs twenty cattle. He also works on the roads.

In the upper valley there is the run of 30,000 acres of Messrs. Jackson, Collins, and Callery, on which they have about 140 cattle.

The soil in the settlement is not deep, and the subsoil is gravel; but when cultivated it produced very good crops.

In the Waitoto Valley, which I did not visit, are eight families, who occupy forty to fifty acres each, and who have cleared about forty acres in all. They have a few cattle, and most of them dig for gold, or work on the roads.

Between the Turnbull and the Okuru, where formerly the Italians were settled, are now located Messrs. Cuttance, Collyer, Lindsay, Nerger, and Macpherson. Mr. Cuttance has a run of 30,000 acres up the Okuru River, and 160 acres at the settlement, of which about twenty acres are cleared; and he owns about 100 cattle.

Mr. Lindsay has 100 acres, of which twenty acres are cleared, and he has a small paddock of good oats, another of potatoes, and one of hay. He runs six cattle, and works at his trade as a blacksmith when there is work to do.

Mr. Macpherson has forty acres in the Okuru and ten acres on the Arawata; he runs eight cattle, and has about five acres cleared. When not employed at home or in the neighbourhood he works on the road.

Mr. Collyer is the ferryman at Okuru, and owns 250 acres; he has fifteen cattle, and has cleared about fifteen acres, including a quarter of an acre in potatoes.

Mr. Nerger occupies fifty acres, and has a few cattle in the bush.

There are altogether settled on the Okuru nine families; on the Waitoto eight families; and on the Arawata five families. In the town there are two families.

The "Stella" and the "Waipara" are supposed to visit Jackson's Bay and the adjacent settlements at equal intervals of six weeks; but they generally arrive at Jackson's Bay within a few days of each other. The "Stella" is usually within a week of her time, and, if it could be arranged that the "Waipara" would be as regular, the settlement would be benefited. At present they can depend on getting stores only once every three months, and at the time of my visit the people at Okuru were very nearly out of bread for want of materials.

Several settlers urged the advisability of opening tracks into the auriferous country between Cascade and Barn Bay. At present, although gold is known to exist there, the toil of getting to it through the forest, and of bringing provisions to it, entirely prevent its development.

A road has been laid out as far as the Cascades, and Mr. Mueller estimates that a foot-track, with gradient not steeper than 1 in 15, could be made on the permanent line for 5s. per chain. This would be simply a bench along which one man could walk. Assuming the distance to be twelve miles, this would cost £240, a sum which, I think, is worth expending in developing this gold-bearing country.

The Cascade Run would also probably be worth stocking if a mining population could find profitable occupation near it.

I was requested to bring under notice the need for a jetty at Jackson's Bay. Some years ago a steamer's jetty was commenced, but it only extends a little beyond low water. What is now wanted, failing the completion of the larger wharf, is a boat-landing jetty in the middle of the bay to the east of the one commenced. Its cost is estimated at £100. This would save landing stores on men's backs through the water, and prevent their getting wet sometimes. The beach is a good one, however, and goods can, with due care, be landed at the present time without damage.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

A. BARRON.