

cargill), and Queenstown, and one, belonging to a private individual, at Opawa, near Christchurch. Now that communication between different parts of the country has been so greatly facilitated by the extension of the railways, it is worthy of consideration whether better results, with less expenditure of money, could not be obtained by having two well-equipped establishments, one in the North and one in the Middle Island, whence the young fry could be easily distributed.

In making the above remarks I have no desire whatever to detract in the slightest degree from the credit that is due to many of the acclimatization societies, for undoubtedly they have rendered lasting and most valuable service to the colony in introducing and stocking our rivers with trout. This good work has been accomplished by the zeal, energy, and public spirit of the members of those societies, who have not only contributed largely from their private purses, but have, year after year, sedulously watched over the hatching of the ova, and afterwards undertaken long and toilsome journeys to distant lakes and rivers to liberate the young fish. My object has been to exhibit the question in a purely economic light, and to suggest a course of action in regard to these societies which, I am inclined to think, would tend to establish them on a satisfactory footing, and promote their well-being, as it would operate in the direction of preventing the undue increase of small weak societies, and thus strengthen and widen the sphere of usefulness of the larger and older ones.

*Harbour Improvement Plans.*—Only two Harbour Boards, viz., Timaru and Oamaru, have forwarded plans this year for publication. These are attached hereto.

*Returns.*—The usual report, by the Marine Engineer, on works carried out, annual returns, wreck-chart, &c., are appended hereto.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM SEED,  
Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister having Charge of the Marine Department.

Captain FAIRCHILD to the SECRETARY, Marine Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

"Hinemoa," s.s., Wellington, 25th March, 1886.

In accordance with instructions contained in your letter of the 13th March, I proceeded to the Antipodes and Bounty Islands, and have to report as follows:—

We reached the Antipodes at 10 a.m. on the 16th March, and, after steaming round the island, found fairly good anchorage on the north-east side, in fifteen fathoms of water, with black sandy bottom. We at once proceeded to land the material and erect the house, which was finished at 5 p.m. on the 17th, and all the stores, &c., deposited therein. I travelled up to the highest part of the island, which I found to be 1,320ft. high, and which I named Mount Galloway, after our chief engineer, who accompanied me. Nearly the whole of the island is covered with coarse grass, and there are over 2,000 acres of land comparatively level, on which albatrosses sit in thousands. There are also two streams of water, taking their source from the mount; one empties into the sea on the north-east side of the island, and the other on the north-west side; each of these streams discharges about five gallons of excellent water per minute. There is no bush or wood of any kind on the island. As far as I could see, there were no off-lying dangers near the island, with the exception of a reef running off the south-west end of the island, about half a mile long, and has a rock on its outer end about three feet out of water. We caught no fish while at the island, although we had fishing-lines from the vessel, and I regret that time would not permit of my taking the boats in search of better fishing-ground. It is high-water, full, and change about 3h. 30m.; range about 6ft.

The house is erected on the north-east end of the island, in the best-sheltered place we could find, about 100ft. above sea-level, and about 300ft. in from shore, and can be seen a good distance off from a vessel approaching from the north-east. Enclosed is a rough sketch of the island.

A peculiar incident happened whilst sinking the holes for the posts for the house. When down about 2ft. we unearthed a piece of an earthenware bowl, which I forward to you, also samples of grasses, fern, and rock of volcanic origin. I also found some pieces of timber, which had been the remains of an old hut; but, as it was New Zealand wood, it had, no doubt, been a sealer's hut.

Sheep and goats would do well on the island, and I would recommend that some be sent there next trip of a Government vessel; also, some English grass and blue-gum and wattle seeds.

The wet weather was not so severe as might be expected; the lowest thermometer was 42°.

The Bounty Islands were reached at 10 a.m. on the 19th, and, after finding a fairly-good anchorage in twenty-three fathoms of water on the north side, we at once proceeded to select a site and erect a house. The house is erected on the largest island, near the western side of the group, and is about 120ft. above sea-level, and can be seen from a vessel approaching from the north. I enclose a rough sketch of these islands, which are fourteen in number, and run from 20ft. to 290ft. in height, and are composed of coarse granite, without a speck of vegetation on them, not even a bit of moss, and no fresh water. They are covered with millions of penguins and other sea-birds. As there is no firewood I would recommend that a cheap cooking-lamp be made, which would burn penguin fat or oil. There would be no trouble in getting any amount of penguin oil, and by this means castaways could cook fish, &c.; and, as for fresh water, I think that, as much rain falls there during a great part of the year, they might catch the rain-water, and so exist. We steamed round the islands and through a passage between what may be called the eastern and western groups, taking frequent soundings. The lead brought up some specimens of very handsome and delicate live shells, which got broken. I regret that I had no time to use the dredge to obtain further specimens, because dredging about the islands would prove interesting. Seals are scarce, as we only saw one; and, like at the Antipodes, we caught no fish, as time would not permit of our going to the best grounds. Near where we built the house we found the remains of an old hut and some firewood; and, as it was New Zealand wood, it was probably left there by a party of sealers from the South Island, who, to my knowledge, visited the Bounty Islands about six years ago.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington.

JOHN FAIRCHILD,