

man and would ferry passengers across at any time; horses would have to swim behind the boat. The Big Mill is now shut up and deserted, although the machinery is still there.

*Character of Land.*—The most of the land along the track is very fair, and with good roads made through it, fit for settlement. The ridges are not nearly so mossy and soft as those we passed through last year, on the S.W. side of Tautuku Bay, and on the whole I think the land much better. The track passes over one or two short softish flats, but does not go along a single soft ridge, and at only two places are these ridges very steep—but neither very long,—and at both places side cuttings, sufficient to allow a horse to pass along easily, have been made. When a dray road becomes necessary, deviations, as shown on sketch, will have to be made. There is also a considerable extent of good land on the banks of Catlin's Lake and River easily accessible by boats, the river being navigable for them for about two miles above the lake, although it would be all the better of having a few of the worst snags, near top end, removed. In the event of blocks being required for settlement I would recommend that the first be taken here and work gradually backward. There is also much valuable silver birch in this valley suitable for sleepers, and easily got at. I have already given you an account of my explorations in February last, along the coast, up this valley, over Table Hill, and down the McLennan Valley to the coast again, so it is unnecessary to repeat it here. I may, however, say that in coming up the coast, I missed the Devil's Blow Hole, as it is called, but again went back in April, and found it to be a long deep hole, probably about six chains long by two wide at top, and to all appearance about 150 feet deep. It communicates by a long subterranean cave with the sea, probably some eight or ten chains away; the waves can be distinctly seen rolling into the hole. In calm weather it makes little or no noise; I passed within two or three chains of it in February, and never heard it. The length of hole lies east and west, and is about three-quarters of a mile, S.W., from Jack's Beach. There is a sort of blazed track to it, but very crooked and hard to follow.

*Timber.*—The timber is similar to that passed through last year, being principally birch and red pine, with a few black and miro pines. We saw more totaras, however, along the banks of main streams. There is not nearly so much of the broad-leaved gum in this part of bush, and it is consequently not such good cattle-grazing country.

*Rocks.*—The rocks are principally of yellow sandstone. At the cliffs, near caves at N.E. end, Taupuku Beach, there are some well defined beds of stratified rock, of various thicknesses, and consisting of different colored beds of sandstone and conglomerate, one over the other. Beds of marine shells are also visible about Taupuku River, and also at Catlin's Lake and River.

*Birds.*—Wild pigeons and kakas are plentiful, also tuis and the other small birds. Grey and teal ducks are plentiful up Catlin's River, but are very shy. There are also a few about Taupuku, but there are a good many blue and mountain ducks up this latter river, and they are easily approached. There are a few penguins on beach.

*Fishes.*—Large shoals of mullet frequent the estuaries of the Taupuku and Catlin's Rivers; flounders are also plentiful at the latter. There are trout in the Upper Taupuku, having been put in by the Acclimatisation Society years ago up at Catlin's cave, under the impression that it was the Tautuku River; eels are also plentiful and very large. A good many porpoises visit Taupuku, and go a considerable distance up, remaining in for days. I saw only one dead seal on the beach.

*Wild Cattle.*—There are no wild cattle along the coast nor along the track; there are, however, plenty far up the Catlin's, and also up the McLennan. Wild pigs are not very numerous, although they are scattered about all over the bush, a few here and there.

*Taupuku Valley.*—A good track has been surveyed from where McLennan's track leaves the one between Waikawa and Wyndham Valley (near Trig. FF, Mokoreta District) via McLennan's Station, and Taupuku Valley down to the sea, a distance of over twenty miles. Where necessary the bush has been cleared, good crossings made at creek fords, culverts put on a great many, where bottom soft, and two bridges erected, one over Lunatic Creek, and the other over Diggers' Creek. Travellers can now ride from Wyndham to Catlin's River by this route, and have a better and safer road than those coming from Fortrose and Waikawa by our last year's track.

*Land.*—As you will see on sketch, there is a good deal of clear land in patches in this valley. The upper clear near McLennan's Station is of fair quality, but light, is good summer country, growing a fine kind of grass and fern. This grass does not stand the winter well, being delicate, the snow grass and silver tussock, are however beginning to establish themselves, and I expect the grazing capacity of this ground will be improved with them. When Mr. McLennan went in first it was all covered with dense scrub and flax, and was almost impenetrable, he deserves great credit for his perseverance in burning, scrub-fencing, clearing and cutting tracks in the bush. A few men like him settled in the scrub valleys of Chasland and Longbeach would soon make some clearings, and would be worth encouraging by giving long leases of small runs, with some compensation for surface sowing with English grasses and clovers. In the middle part of this valley there is some excellent land, principally bush, some of the clears are also good, and grow splendid grass, putting one in mind of many of our best runs over twenty years ago. A number of our best grasses are to be found here, and one I have never seen before, which, I think, would make splendid hay for winter feed. The lower portion of valley is poor, wet and spongy, with a good deal of peat and manuka swamp near river.

*Timber.*—There is some splendid timber about the middle of valley, below upper long clear, and down to large peat bog, all the best timbers are to be found—black and red pine, totara, kowhai, &c. The trees are also very large, the ground easy to work by sawmills, and water power would be available for driving machinery. After crossing the Taupuku River below upper or long clear, there is a splendid forest of silver birch, the trees very tall and straight, and would afford a long employment for a saw mill, as it extends for a considerable distance on both sides of river. White birch is also mixed through it, but I don't think it is valuable unless for inside boarding.