

and that, unhappily, for only four days in the week. Two others were in operation in distant parts of the district. The great extension of the railway-system in the South, and the low rates of freight, have enabled the Southland sawmillers to drive all the less-favoured competitors out of the market, although with but little benefit to themselves. Under existing conditions red-pine can hardly be manufactured in Catlin's River under 5s. 6d. per hundred superficial feet.

It should have been stated that much of the denuded land by the water's edge was more heavily timbered than the greater portion of the interior of the forest, as well as more easily accessible; the proportion of red-pine also appears to have been larger.

There can be no doubt that on the completion of the railway to Catlin's River the timber-trade of the district will speedily revive. Good sites for sawmills may be found at numerous places along the line, and as they are gradually brought into requisition clearing and settlement will be carried on conjointly, the settler finding a market for much of his produce brought to his own door, and having the command of carriage for his surplus by water as well as by rail, for the development of an export trade will be the inevitable concomitant of any large expansion of the inland trade. Even at the present time fully one-half of the timber-yield of the Otago Provincial District is produced in the north-eastern portion of the Tautuku Forest.

LAKE WAKATIPU.

The western banks of the lake, between Kingston and Half-way Creek, were formerly adorned with patches of mixed scrub, here and there interspersed with trees of moderate dimensions, and at the mouths of gullies occasionally blending with large clumps of mountain-beech. At the lake-level, as well as at considerable heights, the effect was delightful, the vegetation adding an element of beauty to the scene, and softening the ruggedness of the steep declivities. When the mountain rata, myrtle, olearia, veronica, and other shrubs were in bloom, patches of crimson and white brightened the effect, and the attention of travellers was at once arrested by the exquisite beauty and grace which adorned the broken rocks and rugged slopes. Unhappily much of this beauty has been destroyed. Licenses to cut firewood amongst the small shrubby growth have been granted and acted upon without the slightest supervision having been exercised. At the date of my visit many cords of firewood were stacked waiting removal by boat, the greater part of it consisting of sticks not more than from four or five inches in diameter, but obtained only by the complete sacrifice of one of the most charming features of that part of the lake. But this destruction, for which the pretence of utility might possibly be pleaded in justification, is not sufficient to satisfy the instinct of the white savage. As soon as the firewood has been removed, a lighted match is applied to the mass of tops and spray not deemed of sufficient value to defray the cost of removal; the mountain-slope is quickly lighted up with a bright blaze, and any renewal of the natural growth is rendered next to impossible; charred stems of palm-lilies (*Cordylina*), rata, beech and other small trees are all that remain to tell of the luxuriant vegetation which once clothed the slopes. The ashes however, facilitate a luxuriant growth of groundsel, thistles, pipiriri, and other weeds, diversified only by scattered bushes of bush-lawyer, and similar unwelcome growths. The transformation is now complete, the grace and beauty of nature are replaced by rugged untidiness, and one of the most attractive features of the lake destroyed for ever. This wanton denudation is not simply a blot on the district, it is a slur on the colony at large, and should be arrested without further delay. The lakes belong to the colony, and their natural attractions should be carefully preserved for the benefit of the colony.

At the northern end of the lake abundant supplies of good firewood can be procured with but little trouble, and without causing any loss of picturesque effect. It is therefore desirable that all licenses to cut firewood on the southern banks of the lake should be cancelled with as little delay as practicable, and steps taken to renew vegetation on the denuded portion at as small a cost as possible.

LAKE WANAKA.

A few miles from Pembroke, at the southern extremity of Lake Wanaka, a small island known as Manuka or Pigeon Island attracts the attention of tourists, from the picturesque effect produced by its irregular outline and somewhat broken character. Its area is probably between three and four hundred acres; it was formerly clothed with forest and scrub, a large portion of which however, is now reduced to charred and blackened trunks. It was let as a sheep-run, with a proviso, as I was informed, that the lessee should not be allowed to fell any except dead trees for firewood or other purposes; but this attempt to preserve the natural attractiveness of the island has been frustrated, doubtless by accident or carelessness, and one of the most charming features in Lake Wanaka has been hideously disfigured, to the great regret of many of the residents in Pembroke.

Looking at the increasing number of tourists attracted to these lakes from all parts of the world it appears most desirable that steps should be taken to renew the arboreal vegetation in the island and prevent its destruction in future.

THE TIMBER-TRADE IN OTAGO.

From a return prepared by the Commissioner of Crown Lands for Otago, I find that eleven saw-mills are in operation in the district, while two others are returned as not working. The total number of men employed is stated to be 101, and the annual output slightly exceeds 7,600,000 superficial feet. I fear, however, that this quantity is an over-estimate under existing conditions; on the other hand, the number of men and boys employed is certainly below the mark, if it is intended to include those employed in the bush. Although six mills are stated to be worked by engines of