

as the country is too cold and wet to allow wheat to properly ripen. The principal industry is sheep-grazing for fattening purposes in connection with the frozen-meat export. The land has been sown with English grasses, and very large areas are occupied by turnips for winter feed. Some winters are very severe, checking the growth of grass, and making it necessary that root crops should be grown for use during the coldest months. One notices here the fact, which especially engages attention throughout New Zealand, that the frozen-meat trade must have had a very great effect upon the industries of the country. Long-wool and crossbred sheep are here most generally used. I noticed also a feature which prevails throughout New Zealand, and which peculiarly impresses the Australian visitor—that is, the extremely large number of rivers and smaller watercourses which run in every direction, and which are mostly fed from the snowy mountains. Another noteworthy thing is the spread of the English white-clover along the roadsides, and almost everywhere where a little soil can be seen. In other places the red-clover grows in rich profusion, having been some years ago fructified by the importation of the bumble-bee. At Lumsden, fifty miles from Invercargill and thirty-seven miles from Kingston, which is the terminal point of the railway upon which I travelled, the mountain-range is practically entered. The country there is comparatively poor, the hills being covered in most cases with light fern and a little grass. In these districts large areas are held for sheep-stations, merino being generally the breed reared for the growth of wool, as the country is not suited for fattening purposes. The lessees of the sheep-runs have suffered immense losses here through devastation wrought by rabbits. Some of the leases held have been abandoned, and leaseholders have been ruined. The difficulty of coping with the rabbit-pest is intensified on account of the rough nature of the country and the very plentiful supply of water. The work of rabbit-destruction in such a country as this is very much more arduous than in our own colony. The rabbits, however, have been considerably reduced in number, principally by the use of phosphorized oats distributed in the winter. Laws have also been enacted making the destruction of the pest compulsory upon the landowners and lessees.

Otago District.

The northern limit of the Southland District is defined by the angle of Lake Wakatipu. Thence I went through the heart of the country to Dunedin, which is the centre of the Land District of Otago. The Dunedin line branches off from Lumsden, and Gore (still in Southland) is the next settlement of consequence. Between the two points the small special settlement of Hokonui is situated. Between Gore and Lumsden is a large area which is generally used for sheep-rearing, the principal agricultural operation, apart from the growth of root crops, being apparently the cultivation of oats upon a comparatively small scale. As the country improves near Gore one notices larger crops and closer settlement. A good deal of dairying is carried on in this part of the district, both by factories and privately by the farmers. Gore is a thriving place, the junction of railways giving it communication between Dunedin and Invercargill; but no special settlements have been adopted there yet. The area between Gore and Dunedin is mostly very fine land, which, generally speaking, is carefully cultivated. The industries pursued seem to be particularly dairying and sheep-breeding. The lowest value of the land is estimated at about £5 per acre, and the estimates vary, often going as high as £15. From Balclutha (on the extensive Clutha River), in whose vicinity there is a small special village settlement, to near Dunedin, the railway passes over some of the best land in Otago, especially along the Taieri River. The prominent feature along the line was Lake Waiholā, between which and the mountains to the west is a plain three or four miles wide, with crops of wheat yielding as high as 60 bushels, and of oats as high as 80 bushels per acre. A good deal of dairying also is done. In this neighbourhood I saw the first crops of wheat, which were beautifully clean, and would probably give about 30 to 35 bushels per acre. I was informed that some of the land upon which these crops grow is priced by the owners at £15 per acre. The value of wheat at the time of my visit was about 3s. 6d. per bushel. The prevailing industries are still sheep-grazing and dairying. A few miles before Dunedin is reached the country becomes rougher, and one notices very little cultivation. It seems to be a peculiar characteristic of New Zealand that the land is either quite open and clear or else covered with dense bush, made almost unpassable by the thickness of the undergrowth. There is practically no lightly-timbered country in the whole colony. This fact should be borne in mind in connection with the conditions which are given above for the clearing of scrub in the settlements. We have practically no South Australian scrub lands in such thickly-timbered areas as are described in New Zealand as bush-land. Dunedin is evidently a thriving city, and it has fine buildings, picturesque surroundings, and an air of permanent prosperity. It is the centre for the cheese-making and other dairying industries in the Otago District. Very little has been done with the special village settlements in Otago; but in the course of interviews with Mr. J. P. Maitland (Commissioner of Crown lands) I obtained some figures in reference to the extent of the operations, which are, generally speaking, conducted on very fair land. The number of sections opened under the village homestead special settlement system is 314, the area being 6,674 acres approximately. This land was proclaimed under the system in 1886-87, and in 1888 the balance unapplied for was withdrawn and reopened under other conditions. One hundred and twenty-four sections were taken up, the area varying from 5 to 50 acres, and the total being nearly 1,780 acres. The advances paid up to the end of 1890 amounted to £1,270. Fifty-one sections were forfeited or abandoned, these representing 864 acres, or nearly half the total. These forfeited sections were not taken up again under the special village homestead system, on account of the suspension previously alluded to. In explanation of the number of forfeitures and abandonments it should be mentioned that in several cases special settlements were opened (in proximity to new railway-lines in course of construction. Holdings were taken up by men engaged upon the lines and houses were erected; but as soon as the progress of the contract compelled the men to work at a considerable distance from those holdings they abandoned them. In a large proportion of the cases the original applicants whose applications were granted did not go upon the land at all. The district hardly provides a fair experiment for the