

almost as regular as courses of masonry. There are some cattle on this island, but, owing to the prevalence of fog at the time of our visit, these were not seen. Their camping places afforded proof of the beneficial influence of stock upon the texture of the peaty soil. Instead of the porous and spongy surface, a compact mould has been formed. The one drawback to the island is its lack of a harbour, there being only a landing-place for boats in fine weather.

The Bounties are a mere cluster of rocks, rising to a height of 150ft. above sea-level. They are absolutely bare of vegetation of any kind, but are in the breeding season the nesting-place of countless penguins. A more dangerous and inaccessible place can nowhere be found, although it has, at one time and another, been the resort of sealers, some of whom have lived for months on the larger islands of the group.

The distances between the several islands are: From the south-west end of Stewart Island to the Snares, sixty-two miles; from the Snares to Auckland Islands, 148 miles; from thence to Campbells, 147 miles; from Campbells to Antipodes, 406 miles; from Antipodes to Bountys, 120 miles; from Bountys to the Bluff, in a direct line, 436 miles.

As bearing upon the capabilities of cultivation of the islands, it was observed at Port Ross that white clover and cocksfoot, introduced grasses, had held their own; and here New Zealand flax, nowhere else to be met with, and probably introduced by either the Enderbys or the Maori refugees, who once were located here, flourishes in great luxuriance. The fact speaks for itself to every New Zealand settler, for it is an axiom that where flax grows strongly almost any other crop can be relied upon. While it is not likely that grain, with the exception perhaps of oats and rye, would ripen satisfactorily, there can be no doubt that the ordinary vegetables of the garden could be easily grown. Fire, and the chipping of tussock, would enable large areas to be cheaply grassed. It would be an error, however, to convey the impression that the islands are suitable for settlement on a small scale. By whomsoever they are taken up, a considerable amount of capital will have, in the first instance, to be expended. Large storage room for wool, and freezing works, would be essential features. The pastoral industry, while it would tend to the banishment of the sea-lions, would not interfere with the fur seals. On the contrary, the pastoral tenants would be their best conservators. Sealing parties usually take with them dogs, the presence of which would be to the pastoral tenants most objectionable.

Although not within the jurisdiction of New Zealand, being, in fact, an appanage of Tasmania, a report on the sealeries would be incomplete without pointed reference to the Macquarries. They are situate about 400 miles S.W. from the Auckland Islands, and are the home of the sea-elephant, sea-leopard, and, during the summer months, of countless penguins of several varieties, among them royal, Victoria, King, and rock-hopper. Some of these attain large dimensions, weighing on arrival from the south as much as 30lb., and yielding fully a gallon of oil. Their utilisation, is, however, a work of danger and difficulty, so that, from a commercial point of view, the islands, which are wholly without timber, and comparatively sterile, are next to valueless. But, lying within easy range of the Aucklands, they constitute a perpetual menace to the sealeries. Although long observation has led to the conclusion that the fur seal is never found upon them, it is, of course, possible that a herd of these animals may at any moment take up their abode there. Hence it would be easy for a poaching vessel that could prove having been at the Macquarries, if afterwards found at the Aucklands with fur sealskins on board, to account for them by declaring that they had been taken on foreign territory. In view of such a contingency, of their geographical position, and of the desirability in the interests of mariners generally of including them within the number of islands to be furnished with provision dépôts and, if necessary, periodically visited, negotiations were about three years ago entered into with the Tasmanian Government for their transfer to New Zealand. The representative branch of the Legislature cordially agreed to the proposal; but the Upper House objected, for reasons that the published correspondence fails to disclose, and the business fell through. Recent events, notably the arrival in New Zealand waters of the Norwegian whaler and sealer "Antaretic," with the avowed purpose of cruising among the islands to the south, strongly suggest the urgency of re-opening negotiations for the transfer of the Macquarries from Tasmania to New Zealand. Unless the former colony consents to this course, the continued preservation of the sealeries, which have been for years sedulously protected, and at considerable outlay, must become an exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, task.

A middle course has been suggested—namely, that, while possession of the Macquarries should remain with Tasmania, their guardianship should be delegated to New Zealand. This, of course, would involve legislation by each colony; but that, in view of the situation as it now presents itself, should not be a difficult matter.

In closing these notes of observation, I desire to express my sense of obligation to Messrs. Gordon, McBeath, Danby, and Travers, my fellow-voyagers. The two first-named gentlemen are practical sheep-farmers. Mr. McBeath is manager of Williamson Brothers' extensive stations in Poverty Bay district, North Island, and Mr. Gordon a practical pastoralist in the same district. Both gentlemen have had Home experience, in colder regions than any of the southern islands. Mr. Gordon will, I understand, publish the result of his examination of the country. Mr. Travers, who was most indefatigable in his search for specimens of the avifauna of the islands, will also, I understand, communicate the result of his work to the Press of Wellington.

The Snares Islands were scarcely within the scope of my instructions, but I may be permitted to say that they are neither barren nor unsuitable for occupation. When the proposed lighthouse is erected, it will be possible to run on the two main islands, on which there is abundant firewood and grass, some 1,500 or 2,000 sheep, the produce of which will render them, so to speak, self-supporting.

Fishery here might be remunerative, but in the more southern islands not so. Those caught were infested with worms to a degree that rendered them most repulsive. Some of the crew of the Norwegian whaler made light of these parasites, asserting that they were common at certain seasons to the codfish of the northern seas—that on being sprinkled with salt the worms came to the surface and were easily removed, the fish being then cured in the ordinary manner.