

return afterwards to Manapouri. Next year it is our intention to arrange with the Union Company to pick us up at Dusky. We can then easily carry ample food with us one way, and practically defy the weather.

The pass must some day be of importance, when our lakes and fiords become, as they must sooner or later, the pleasure and health-restoring grounds of Australasia. The pass will connect the most southern arm of our great inland lakes with nearly the most southern of our sounds. The next pass to the north is that connecting Te Anau with Caswell Sound, some seventy miles from the entrance to Dusky Sound. We of course omit the pass into Hall's Arm discovered by the search-party for the late Professor Brown, with whom I was associated, and which was subsequently traversed by Messrs. Murrell and Barber to Deep Cove, it being too steep on the west side for road-connection. Although we encountered steep faces on the Spey side, we afterwards observed routes whereby all these difficulties can be avoided. A bridle track should be surveyed and formed as soon as the Government can afford the outlay. That would then complete the connecting link of a circuit embracing beautiful Manapouri, the Waiau, Lake Te Anau and island, the magnificent Clinton Valley, Sutherland Falls, Lake Ada, and the grand Milford Sound; then following the coast to the south, taking all the sounds by the way. Nowhere in the whole world could there be found within so small a compass so much that is beautiful and grand.

The Government should declare a public park of a large portion of that country, appoint local men to act as conservators, and insist upon stringent regulations regarding fires. During a dry season a careless light might fire the moss, and in a short time a world of loveliness might be transformed into a scene of desolation.

There is very little land for settlement. In some of the valleys good soil is occasionally met with, but it is very limited in extent. On some of the mountain-tops there is good summer feed for sheep, but the absence of winter country renders it valueless. The uplands could be most profitably occupied by deer, chamois, and goats. Many of the mountain-tops are bare rock. Birch timber occupies all the valleys, and up the faces to the usual bush-line, wherever the mountain-sides are not too steep. The usual subalpine plants are abundant on the west Spey and Mackenzie Saddle. The clemesia genus are particularly well represented. They were, however, out of flower, and new varieties were not easily recognised.

Regarding the bird-life of the locality, judging from the noise and the beaten track of the kakapo on the mountains, the kiwi and kakapo are still fairly numerous. The black and brown Maori-hen turned up at nearly all our camps. Here and there blue mountain ducks were seen on the rivers, and were very tame. We saw no paradise, grey, or teal duck, except on the lake. We saw no pigeons, but a number of kakas. The plumage of the kaka is much brighter here than in our eastern woods. Robins are very numerous, and quite took possession of our tents. Bush and rock wrens are plentiful. Tuis and makomako were well represented up the West Spey. We saw three rare saddle-backs, and a few yellow wattle-crows. We did not see a single specimen or trace of the English birds, or vermin of the ferret order. Rabbits have reached the head waters of the South Spey. We saw the traces of a wild dog, who is evidently having a good time on kiwi and kakapo. We saw one native rat. There was no trace of that exceedingly rare, if not extinct, bird, the *Notornis mantelli*, the Tokaki of the Maoris.

It had been supposed that some remnants of the lost Ngatimamoe tribe might be met with in the country explored, but we saw no trace of them.

We calculated with 13° variation; Mr. Pillans undertook the arduous task of pacing out the whole distance and observing. We do not submit the plan as being more than a rough and, necessarily, imperfect sketch of our undertaking. Attached to it, I have sent an approximate sketch of route taken by the Mainwaring Brown search-party. That furnishes a connection between the Spey River and Deep Cove of Hall's Arm, which may be of use should any exploring-party require to come over from the West Coast.

T. MACKENZIE.

APPENDIX No. 7.

WANGANUI RIVER STEAM-SERVICE.

I BEG to supply the following information relative to the above:—

Trips.—In addition to specials to wayside settlements, and regular weekly mail trips to Pipiriki, the steamer has made eleven extra trips; in all sixty-three trips to Pipiriki for the year ending 31st March. On three occasions only was she unable to reach her destination.

Mileage run.—For the year the steamer ran 10,034 miles on the river.

River Improvement.—The River Trust Board had seven men employed for four months, but much of their time was wasted by Native obstruction. The improvement effected was 20in.—that is, the steamer can now reach Pipiriki with 20in. less water in the river than prior to this work. The actual expenditure was under £400. The following places urgently want attending to: Ahokura, Upokopoitoi, Matihiwi, Moutoa, and Haumoana, and the eel-fences in the channel taken out. A gang of men would do it all in four months if the Natives would allow it.

Bridge Timber.—The steamer took up the whole of the bridge material and timber for the bridges on the Pipiriki-Karioi Road.

Views.—We send you one of Hiruherama (Jerusalem), one showing a Native eel-fence in the channel, and one showing the "Wairere" at Pipiriki.

New Steamer.—We expect to have the new steamer running in August. Her dimensions are 115ft. over all by 18ft. beam; draft light, 14in.; speed, 11½ miles an hour; two decks, passenger deck overhead. She will be specially suited for stock-carrying, and will command a river limit passenger license for 400 persons. She costs about £5,000.

ALEX. HATRICK.