

opinion that the only direct and practicable route for a pass between the Hermitage and the West Coast is *via* some saddle west of the Footstool, and FitzGerald's Pass is the best of these. That there is no saddle entirely free of ice in the summer has been well known to some of us for a considerable time past; and if the general instructions had not been to find a saddle which has neither snow nor ice on it in the summer, this route would have probably been acknowledged as the best two or three years ago. To find a pass such as has been desired by the department one must go miles down the Landsborough River, a most round-about route, though possessing much grand scenery. But when a route can be taken direct in a few miles, necessitating at the most a small amount of walking, it seems a pity to go further afield for one absolutely free of snow.

Tourists who wish to see a place for its own sake, and do not only desire to visit a locality with a minimum of trouble simply for the sake of saying they have been there, will be willing to put up with a little extra exertion, and will probably have to do so for some years to come. For, though it is admitted to be advisable in every way to make the best use possible of grand scenery, a country can but meet the travelling public half-way at first, and open up out-of-the-way places for those who will go to a little discomfort; and when the number of tourists increase the conveniences will increase also, by private as well as Government enterprise. It seems a pity to see some of the most magnificent scenery, which could be opened up by foot-tracks at little expense, neglected for want of money, while localities which cannot boast of one-half such attractions have large sums spent on them to allow travellers to go there in unnecessary comfort, simply because they have been unduly advertised in the papers by some writer who has been there, and possibly nowhere else, and whose opinion, if the truth were known, is of little value.

I have been fortunate enough to have knocked about a good deal, and seen much fine scenery in other parts of the world, and am in a position to compare our country with such places, in nearly every case to the advantage of New Zealand. But some of the best scenery in the colony is unknown except to one or two of us who have pushed into unexplored valleys, and, unless opened up on a small scale by foot-tracks, will be unknown for many years to come.

ARTHUR P. HARPER.

APPENDIX NO. 10.—PATEA AND WANGANUI RIVERS.

REPORT ON THE NAVIGATION OF PATEA RIVER, BY G. T. MURRAY, Esq., ROAD-SURVEYOR, WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 6th April, 1895.

In accordance with instructions (S.G. 25992/2) of 6th February, I have now the honour to report as follows on the Patea River:—

I left Wanganui on the morning of the 13th March; spent the rest of the day at Patea in preparations for the trip, and started up the river on Thursday morning, the 14th, in an ordinary river rowing-boat, with Mr. McKenna, the Mayor of Patea; Mr. Martin, photographer, Wanganui; and two men.

On that day, after nine hours' pulling, we reached Robertson's house at the 18-mile point, and there we stayed the night. Next morning we started off in a light canoe belonging to Robertson, the Mayor and the two men going back to Patea, and Mr. Martin, two Robertsons, and I going on for three days further. That brought us to the 49 miles, and, as my time was limited, I left the canoe there, walked to Eltham, and came on to Wanganui on the forenoon of the 19th, while Mr. Martin and the men returned to Patea by the river. I intended going as far as the Mangaehu junction, but, as stated above, had not time.

The river was unusually low at the time: this made the ascent of the rapids much more difficult. During the last three days all hands had very frequently to get into the water and shove the canoe up by sheer lifts; besides, passages had frequently to be cleared of snags and boulders, and at several points trees right across the river had to be chopped out before the canoe could be taken past. On the journey 139 rapids were passed, besides numerous slight runs. On the map accompanying I have marked most of the principal ones; but there were so many, especially towards the upper end, and the turns of the river were so hard to identify, that I have omitted a large number from the plan.

The rapids were distributed as follows: First day—From 1 mile (Patea) to 18 miles: 18 rapids; 30ft. rise; average rise per rapid, 1.6ft. Second day—From 18 miles to 29½ miles: 37 rapids; 70ft. rise; average rise per rapid, 1.9ft. Third day—From 29½ miles to 40 miles: 43 rapids; 80ft. rise; average rise per rapid, 1.9ft. Fourth day—From 40 miles to 49 miles: 41 rapids; 70ft. rise; average rise per rapid, 1.7ft.

The total rise to 49 miles is therefore 250ft., as nearly as could be got by aneroid. The Chief Surveyor (New Plymouth) informs me that the height of the Patea-Mangaehu junction at 59 miles is 330ft. This would agree very well with my heights, which I checked on to Eltham.

Besides these rapids enumerated above, there are, of course, many small runs, and a certain fall even in the quiet reaches. The rapids average about 1ft. fall each, only about half a dozen being 2ft. fall or over. The 47-mile rapid is the greatest fall—about 3ft. in less than 1 chain.

Speaking generally, the rapids below the 23 miles are mostly caused by slips or snags, but upwards from 23 miles by gravel, shell-rock reefs, or boulders, and by volcanic or eruptive rocks from Mount Egmont. In many rapids the water runs over clean shell-rock or papa bottoms in