

here an enormous area of useless and non-productive country. The timber generally hugs the littoral or maritime regions, but is somewhat patchy, and varies considerably in quality.

From the head-waters of the Pelorus Sound the coastal range, extending nearly to Nelson, contains fine timber, but a vast majority of the trees are beech (birch), with pines growing on the flats and hillsides at low altitude.

Leaving the Pelorus, the wooded slopes of the Tuamarina and Rai Valleys open up, and rimu and kahikatea, mixed with matai, miro, and totara, can be seen clothing the slopes of the hills fast closing in the narrow valley of Pelorus, whilst away in the distance, set in a frame of blue sky, with a foreground of shining river and a background of dark-green, almost purple, trees, Maungatapu's lofty head keeps lonely watch and ward over the scene of the brutal murders committed by the Sullivan gang.

From a forest point of view there is nothing calling for special attention to record from the Rai Saddle to Nelson, and the traveller on this route is successively struck with admiration by the skill of the coachman (Newman), the marvellous training of his horses, the engineering science exhibited in the making of these dangerous and hair-raising roads, and the courage of the men and women who travel over them.

The pretty town of Nelson was reached late on Saturday night, and Sunday devoted to inspecting its picturesque surroundings. The local Botanic Gardens were duly admired, and I cannot but compliment the curator on the excellent taste shown in laying out the ground, and congratulate the Town Council on the result of his work. Nelson has every reason to be proud of its Botanic Gardens, and on the *tout ensemble* of the environs of the city.

Leaving Nelson on Monday, a short stage was covered to Foxhill, and opportunity taken to note that in the early days of Nelson immense quantities of timber had been destroyed, used, and sold from the hills adjacent to the town. These, which encircle Nelson in the form of a crescent, were at one time—not so very many years ago—densely timbered with fine forest trees. But here again the theory that “a man who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before,” no matter what he destroys to accomplish this, is a benefactor, was universally adopted. Hence thousands of thousands of acres for miles around in this fertile province were converted into pasturage for sheep by the sacrifice of millions of pounds' worth of timber destroyed to attain this worthy (?) end.

A large quantity of timber exists in the neighbourhood of Golden Bay and along the rivers debouching into it, more particularly on the Motueka and Takaka Rivers, while portions of the Waimea district appear to have been extensively wooded at a comparatively recent date. In nearly every instance the timber proper—*i.e.*, rimu, kahikatea (white-pine), matai, and miro—seems to hug the lower altitudes, while the higher elevations are covered with beech. A grave mistake in calculating the quantity of timber available in this district has evidently been committed here by persons not fully conversant with timber-supply. They saw apparently immense forests spread out before the eye, but quite failed to realise that by far the greater portion of the trees in sight were merely beech scrub on the high lands, while the good timber is confined to the flats and banks of creeks and other streams running into the main rivers.

The timber on the Motupiko River is somewhat scattered, with “bushes” of better timber in the lower parts than in the higher, where it is decidedly inferior. From this point—Motupiko—to the Lyell the timber is inferior, and, though patches of good bush doubtless exist, nowhere can they be said to be either plentiful or of extra good quality.

The Buller, with its wonderful gorge, shows large quantities of good timber, but the bulk of this is so inaccessible that it is useless to reckon this forest as a source of supply, except, perhaps, for mining purposes. Here the trees grow in picturesque profusion right up the steep precipitous cliffs, which neither man nor beast could climb. A few sawmills between Longford and the Inangahua Junction supply the miners with building and mining materials, but the “plants” are small, and the output in proportion to the machinery in use. The steep cliffs of the Buller are clothed with foliage right down to Westport, the light brownish-green of the rimu and the darker shade of the white-pine standing out amid the beech scrub, all beautiful to look at, though the last-named is commercially of little value.

Leaving Westport, a trip was made by rail to the terminus at Mokihinui, passing Millerton, Seddonville, and other stations, and visits paid *en route* to several sawmills. All the timber for these is obtained from flats between the coast-line and the mountains lying just back from the sea. This timber is of excellent quality, but not very abundant, the best of it being obtained from places a few feet above sea-level.

At Mokihinui a sawmill is situated in a good bush, the extent of which is not known. It apparently extends through a long valley of the river, and may run for many miles. The timber here is excellent, and there is no difficulty in getting it out, as the grades for tramways are easy, and the country fairly accessible. The forest included some large rata-trees.

There appears to be a considerable supply of timber in this district, and the Government would do well to proclaim the whole valley a State forest.

Returning to Westport, the journey through the Buller Gorge was safely negotiated, and the fine flats of the Inangahua River were inspected. Some splendid specimens of the white and rimu pines were seen, tall, straight, and of good girth, but in far too many instances the settler has “settled” the timber by burning it.

Reefton was reached on Friday, the 7th August, the following day being devoted to visiting the sawmills in the neighbourhood of this large mining centre. I visited Messrs. Erickson at their mill, and interviewed them on the quality and quantity of timber in their neighbourhood. The usual mixture of rimu, white-pine, matai, miro, and beech is found here. The last-named are unusually good, and very large trees are obtainable. For some miles along the river-flats timber of splendid quality is still available, but the bulk of it is beech of unusually good