

MARLBOROUGH.

1. Messrs. Brownlee and Co. own what is known as the Pelorus Mill, situated at Blackball, on the Pelorus River. This is a very fine up-to-date mill with a steam-power of 250 indicated horse-power. The timber cut is brought down the valley for a distance of about fifteen miles by a well-constructed steam tram-line from the Rongo Valley. A new mill is being constructed near the junction of the Rongo and Opouri branches of the Rai River, to work some of the timber going up these valleys. Tram-lines are now being constructed into these bushes, and an extensive log-hauling plant is already established in the Rongo Valley. This mill employs seventy hands—thirty-four in the mill and thirty-six in the bush; and it is roughly estimated that the mill has command of enough timber to keep it going for over ten years. The output of this mill is about 3,600,000 superficial feet, of which about 2,400,000 ft. is sent to other districts within the colony (chiefly to Lyttelton) for building purposes, and 1,200,000 superficial feet is used locally for building purposes. Cutting on Crown lands only.

2. Bryant Bros.' mill is situated on the east side of the Rai Valley, about two miles above the Rai Falls, and is cutting at present from Crown lands. About 500,000 superficial feet is the last year's output. According to their statement, they employ nine hands, and estimate that they have about seven years' work in front of them. The timber is used within the district for building purposes.

3. Cate's sawmill is situated at Flat Creek, west side of Rai Valley, and turns out about 500,000 superficial feet, all of which is for local building purposes, and is obtained from land owned by Europeans. Employs ten hands in mill and bush. Has, roughly, about two or three years' cutting ahead of them.

4. Kenepuru Sawmill: Situated at Kenepuru Sound. Cuts about 500,000 superficial feet. Building-material locally, and sleepers for Railway Department. Employs six men in the mill and five in bush. Cuts from land owned by Europeans. Have about three years' cutting before them.

5. Clinton Mill: Situated up the Puhipuhi River, Kaikoura District. Cut about 250,000 ft. last year from both Crown lands and lands owned by Europeans. Used for building purposes, Kaikoura and surrounding districts. Has probably about five or six years' cutting ahead.

6. Rai Falls Mill: Situated near the junction of the Pelorus and Rai Rivers. Output, about 650,000 ft. last year, cut from land owned by Europeans, and used generally for building purposes in Blenheim. Have just shifted their mill to lower down the Pelorus Valley, where they have probably two years' cutting.

7. Rongo Sawmills: Situated near the head of the Rai Valley. Owned by Robertson Bros. Output, about 900,000 superficial feet. Cut from State forest. About 600,000 ft. rimu used for building purposes, balance chiefly white-pine used for case-making. All goes by wagon to Nelson. Employs eight men in mill, six men in bush, besides carters, &c.

8. Mountain Camp Mill: Situated on the east side of the Wakamarina Valley. Output, about 550,000 superficial feet, obtained from European-held land. Used for local building purposes. Four hands employed in mill and four in bush.

9. Canvastown Sawmills: Situated about two miles up the Wakamarina Valley. Output, 550,000 superficial feet. Cut from State forest. Chiefly used within the district for building purposes in Marlborough, but a little building-timber is exported to Wellington. Employs six hands in the mill and five in the bush. Estimated to have about five years' work in front of them.

10. Brooklyn Bay Sawmill: Situated near the lower reach of the Pelorus River, near where it joins the Sound. The output is said to be about 720,000 superficial feet per annum. Cut from European-owned land, and is chiefly sent to Blenheim for building purposes. Twelve hands are employed. The owners—Messrs. Tapp and Eager—estimate that they have only twelve months' more work before them until they are cut out.

11. Onamalutu Mill: Situated up the Onamalutu River. Turns out about 600,000 superficial feet of timber. Cut from European-owned land, and is used in Marlborough for building purposes. Eleven men employed in mill and bush. Estimated to have about three years' supply of timber ahead of them.

12. Sutton's mill: Situated near Brooklyn Bay, Pelorus Sound. Cuts about 300,000 ft., obtained from land owned by settlers. Timber used locally for building purposes. Ten men employed.

13. Spensley's mill: Situated up Puhipuhi River, Kaikoura. Cuts about 250,000 ft., from European land. Employs ten hands. Timber used locally for building.

14. Miskin's mill: Situated near Kaikoura. European land. Employs five men. Annual output, about 250,000 superficial feet. Used locally.

GENERAL REMARKS: STATE-OWNED LAND.

The quantity of timber cut from State forests and Crown lands upon which royalties have been paid is as follows: Cut from State forests from 1st April, 1906, to 31st March, 1907, 2,316,997 superficial feet, yielding a revenue of about £576 13s. in royalty; cut from unoccupied Crown lands during the same period, 2,794,222 superficial feet, yielding a gross revenue of about £599 (40 per cent. of this, amounting to about £240, is handed over to the local bodies, leaving a net revenue of about £359). The total quantity of timber cut from State-owned land was about 5,111,219 superficial feet, made up of 3,090,469 superficial feet of rimu, 1,185,395 superficial feet of kahikatea or white-pine, 410,528 superficial feet of matai, and 48,539 superficial feet of totara.

The approximate quantity of timber cut from land owned by Europeans is 4,577,000 superficial feet—probably divided as to quantities of timber much the same as that obtained from public forests.

Purposes for which the timber is used: With the exception of a small quantity of birch timber cut by one mill for railway-sleepers, and about 304,000 superficial feet of white-pine used for box-making, the timber is used for building purposes. About 3,500,000 ft. of the timber is exported to places within the colony—2,500,000 ft. to Lyttelton and southern ports, and 1,000,000 ft. to Nelson; the balance is used locally for building purposes.

The total number of men employed in and about the mills is about two hundred, and there are probably twenty or thirty more men employed as carters, &c.

The total amount of cutting which these fourteen mills estimate they have ahead of them from their present bushes would amount to about 65,000,000 superficial feet. This, although representing a large proportion of the available milling timber in this district, does not represent the whole. There is probably from 80,000,000 to 100,000,000 superficial feet of milling timber still available, and at a greater cost for collection as the bushes get worked out. The total available timber may be put down at perhaps 120,000,000 superficial feet of the class of timber now being cut. After that we shall have to fall back upon inferior timber, such as birch growing on the higher country.