

HAWKE'S BAY.

The following are some interesting particulars in connection with the sawmilling industry in the southern portion of the Hawke's Bay Land District—an industry which, unfortunately, will soon be a feature of the past in this district, owing to its supply becoming exhausted or too difficult of access to pay to work at present. It is estimated that at the present rate of cutting, in about four years' time there will be very few, if any, mills working, and many mill-owners are taking steps to secure milling bush outside of Hawke's Bay District.

Starting from Weber and proceeding towards Dannevirke, the first mill to be met with is one in the Ngapaeruru Block, some six miles off the main road, owned by J. Gilmour, and cutting over Crown settlers' leaseholds. The plant is a small one, with a 4-horse-power portable engine, and executing local orders. Some 22,000 ft. of totara timber was supplied for roadworks during the year.

Next to be met with are the Union Timber Company (Limited) and W. G. Hunter, working on Native land and Crown settlers' leaseholds respectively, the timber from the former finding a market in Wanganui, Wellington, and Palmerston North. From Hunter's mill 2,000 ft. of totara was supplied for roadworks.

In the Tiratu Block, near Dannevirke, are to be seen two mills belonging to the Tiratu Sawmilling Company, who also own a planing-mill at Mangatera.

Proceeding southwards from Dannevirke and towards Woodville are found, on the west side of the main road, the Hawke's Bay Timber Company and the Dannevirke Sawmilling Company, working on Crown land in Tamaki Block, and John Crallan's mill, drawing its supplies from settlers' freeholds. To the east of Oringi Railway-station the Totara Sawmilling Company's mill is working on Native land in Kaitoki Block.

Leaving Dannevirke and proceeding northwards along the main Dannevirke-Napier coach-road is seen R. Holt's mill, working on Crown land, Piripiri Block, most of the timber from which finds a market in Hastings and Napier.

Further on are found Gammon and Co., cutting on Te Ohu Block; Bartholomew Bros., Ruahine Sawmilling Company, and Anderson, Sons, and Co., on Piripiri Block. Messrs. Gammon and Co. have a planing-mill also, near Matamau, and two mills on the Rakaiatai Block, from which some 50,000 ft. of totara was obtained for the Roads Department, and 300,000 ft. of white-pine shipped to Sydney.

P. Cohr and Co. are next found, working in Makaretu and carting out their timber to Takapau Railway-station.

Proceeding eastward from Ormondville are seen the Waikopiro Sawmill Company and Morrison Bros., the former supplying a quantity of telegraph-poles to the Telegraph Department during the year.

Near Norsewood, W. Parsons is cutting mixed timber for local requirements and the Wellington market.

Near Ongaonga, Milburn Bros. are established, obtaining supplies from Forest Gate settlers and European freeholds.

Proceeding from Waipawa and out to Hampstead (better known as Tikokino) is seen Manson and Co.'s Guavas Mill, working on freehold in Guavas Bush, over an area of about 700 acres, with four miles of tram-line to connect with the mill. A steam locomotive, traction-engine, and forty horses are in requisition. This firm have timber-yards at Waipawa and Hastings, to which most of the supplies are sent.

Manson and Co. (Attic Mill) is to be met with on the Hampden-Wakarara Road. Probably in four years' time Manson and Co. will have cut out the bush at this and Guavas Mill. About four miles west of Kaikora North, on the road to Argyll Settlement, the Argyll Sawmilling Company are established, cutting over European freehold, and supplying principally local requirements.

A mill—McKain and Hutchinson—at the mouth of the Mohaka River, north of Napier, completes the list of mills to be found in the south portion of the Hawke's Bay District.

In the northern portion of the district there are only five mills working at the present time, in the following localities:—

Starting northward from Mohaka (the last one mentioned of those within the southern division of the district), the first of which is the Alpha Mill at Gisborne, the property of the Alpha Sawmilling Company, which employs eighteen hands, and its cutting-capacity is stated to be about 100,000 superficial feet per annum. This company imports its timber from Auckland.

The next one is situated on the Waipaoa River, some four or five miles north of Karaka; it is known as the Tapuihikatia Mill, and is run by a company, but operations have been suspended of late. When in full work about twenty-five hands are employed, and the cutting-capacity is put down at 2,000,000 superficial feet per annum; it is estimated they have about 60,000,000 superficial feet of timber available.

About two miles further north on the same river is O'Rourke's mill, known as the "Mangakino." This is of small capacity, and only seven hands find employment here. The timber is carted to Karaka, and conveyed by rail to Gisborne, to supply local market only.

The next in rotation is another small mill, owned by Mr. Hansen, and is located at Motu, and employs only three hands, the cutting-capacity being 150,000 superficial feet per annum.

The most northern and last of the mills is known as De Latour's; it is situated on a tributary of the Awatere River, about ten miles from Te Araroa; it has an annual output of about 100,000 superficial feet, and gives employment to ten men. A good deal of its timber is disposed of locally, and the remainder shipped to Auckland and Gisborne.

In all, there are thirty-eight timber-mills working, with a total nominal horse-power of 1,079. The estimated cutting-capacity of mills per annum is 70,804,000 superficial feet, and the annual output 40,868,118 superficial feet, in the following proportions: Totara, 5,654,000 superficial feet; matai, 11,010,000 superficial feet; rimu, 19,568,412 superficial feet; kahikatea, 4,635,706 superficial feet; total, 40,868,118 superficial feet.