

## MARLBOROUGH.

The Marlborough Land District, occupying the north-east corner of the South Island, and containing about 2,792,500 acres of land, is bounded generally on the north and east by Cook Strait and the east coast as far as the Conway River; thence by that river to its junction with the Towy River; from this point, by straight lines, rivers, and the summits of watersheds, to the western side of Tennyson Inlet, Pelorus Sound. From the Conway to the Acheron River it abuts on to the Canterbury Land District, and from that river to Pelorus Sound it is bounded by the Land District of Nelson.

The widest part of the district is from Cape Campbell to Tophouse, a distance of about sixty-seven miles, and the extreme length from Cape Jackson to the Conway is 120 miles.

*Physical Features.*

The district throughout is generally mountainous, but none even of the highest peaks are covered with perpetual snow, although Tapuaenuku, the highest of the Inland Kaikouras, attains an altitude of 9,462 ft. Of the Seaward Kaikouras, or Looker-on Mountains, the highest points are Manukau and Te Ao, Whakari, which are 8,562 ft. and 8,516 ft. respectively. There are several lesser peaks, from 4,000 ft. upwards.

The portion of Marlborough north-west of the Wairau River, extending to the boundary of the Nelson Land District, and including the County of Sounds, in all about 280,000 acres, was originally covered with dense forest. In the valleys and on the lower hill-slopes, rimu, kahikatea, matai, totara, miro, and tawa were the principal forest-trees. The higher portion of the hills and steep spurs are clothed with the various species and variety of birch (beech), to which along the shores of the Sounds were added pukatea and kohekohe, the latter locally called cedar.

Since 1860 sawmills have been at work in various parts of the district. Thirty-five mills have been erected, and have worked for longer or shorter periods. Havelock, on the Pelorus Sound, is at present the headquarters of the timber trade.

The hills along the shores of the Sound will, for many years, furnish birch sleepers. There are other timbers left in places, but nowhere sufficient to justify the erection of a mill, unless pukatea wood, hitherto neglected, could be utilised. It is a light, tough timber, well adapted for boat-building and for packing-cases. The quantity of pine timber remaining in the Kaituna and Onamalutu Valleys is small, but there is a good supply of birch and other wood, suitable for fencing and firewood. On these valleys the Wairau Plain is mainly dependent for timber.

The Pelorus Valley, with its tributaries the Wakamarina, Rai, Ronga, and Opouri Valleys, still contain about 170,000,000 ft. of convertible timbers, exclusive of the birch, of which there is a large amount of the best quality on the hills and terraces. The Wairau, Blenheim, and other districts extending southwards must depend for the future on this source for all their building-material.

In the neighbourhood of Kaikoura, along the base of Mount Fyffe, and in the Hapuku Valley, there is another small block of forest land in which three small sawmills have been erected. The quantity of timber suitable for sawmill purposes in this block is very limited, but it will furnish the neighbouring country with firewood and fencing for many years.

## VARIETIES OF TIMBER TREES, AND USES.

2. *Totara*.—Grows generally on flats and lower slopes of hills, up to about 3,000 ft. to 3,500 ft. About 500,000 sup. ft. in the district, the bulk of which is in Kaikoura district. Very durable. Useful for nearly all kinds of construction—fences, piles, shingles, building, sashes, doors. Used for general purposes for which good timber is required—telegraph-poles, sleepers, &c. Value, £1 5s. undressed to £1 8s. dressed per 100 sup. ft. Probably the most valuable timber in New Zealand; of great utility. Not good firewood, as it sparks too much to be safe.

3. *Totara kiri kotukutuku*.—Grows generally on flats and lower slopes of hills, up to about 3,000 ft. to 3,500 ft. About 300,000 sup. ft. in district. Very inferior timber to totara; of very little special value. Frequently passed off upon unsuspecting persons as totara. Value, 15s. per 100 sup. ft. Should be classed with kohekohe and other inferior timber for general purposes.

4. *Matai*.—Grows generally on river and alluvial flats, lower slopes of hills, &c. About 8,000,000 sup. ft. in district. A good durable timber. Too brittle for many constructive works. Used for rusticated weatherboards, floors, framing of houses, house-blocks, piles (bridge), fence-posts, &c. Value, 18s. undressed to £1 1s. 6d. dressed per 100 sup. ft. A good valuable timber, especially for floors, for which purpose it is probably the best New Zealand timber we have. Would be much used for bridges, but it is too short in the grain to be used much when subject to lateral strain.

5. *Kawaka*.—Grows on high damp ranges and shady side of hills. About 10,000 sup. ft. in district. Not durable, and of little value for anything. Would cut into good house-lining, and perhaps boat-planking if it was accessible. Good cabinet-wood. It is used very rarely, as it is very scarce on low ground. It may sometimes be used as strainers on mountain fences. It is scarce in Marlborough. Useless as fuel; will not burn. Would probably make good shingles.

6. *Pahautea*.—Not known in this district apart from Kawaka.

9, 10. *Westland Pine*, *Yellow Silver-pine*.—A little of this is found on the very high tops in Marlborough, in the form of scrub. It is fairly plentiful in the Grey Valley, on the hilltops at Amuri, and on some of the high bush-clad ranges in Poverty Bay. A remarkable feature about this timber is that the dense black smoke which it gives off in burning does not make the eyes smart.

12. *Tawhai raunui* (Tooth-leaved Beech).—Grows on river-flats, lower slopes of hills, generally particularly well up to 4,000 ft. Of all the *Fagus* tribe there is about 10,000,000 sup. ft. in district. A fine durable timber. Useful for all constructive works—piles, beams, bridge-decking, all outside