

## SOUTHLAND.

The Southland District may be stated to comprise the Counties of Fiord, Stewart Island, Southland, Wallace, and part of Lake, and is bounded on the north and east by the Otago District, and on the south and west by the Tasman Sea, and may be said to lie between south latitudes 45° and 47° and east longitudes 166° 15' and 169° 15'. For administrative purposes, however, the Snares, Auckland, Enderby, Campbell, Antipodes, Bounty, and all other islands within the limits of the Dominion south of the 47° parallel of south latitude are included in it.

The total area of the district, including Stewart Island, but exclusive of Solander, Ruapuke, and the other small islands enumerated above, is 7,583,892 acres, of which 2,405,040 are covered with bush. A considerable area in the Fiord County consists of wild alpine country with scrubby bush reaching to the snow-line. This little-known country extends to the western sea, and there presents the remarkable indentations of the coast-line known as the West Coast Sounds. The whole region is a paradise for the artist, and, indeed, for all enthusiastic lovers of nature, but has little attraction for the agriculturist or pastoralist. The bush land suitable for timber lies in the neighbourhood of Forest Hill, Longwood, Hokonui, Waikawa, and on Stewart Island. The timbers of commercial value are totara, rimu, miro, matai, kahikatea, rata, towhai, and kamahi, in mixed bushes; but *Fagus Menziesii* and other beeches predominate on the high lands.

For many years the active efforts of the sawmiller have proved a source of considerable wealth. No less than sixty-two sawmills are now at work off and on within the timber-areas of Southland, and although the quantity of timber sawn during 1908—viz., 49,000,000 sup. ft.—has exceeded that produced in former years, there can be no doubt that the industry will be very considerably reduced in the near future.

The total estimated quantity of timber is 2,667,933,000 sup. ft., only 1,294,580,000 sup. ft. of which is suitable for milling; but as the timbered land in Southland is very patchy, and extends over large areas, it may well be that this estimate falls considerably short of the actual quantity.

## VARIETIES OF TIMBER TREES, AND USES.

Black-mapau (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*), white-mapau (*Pittosporum Eugenioides*), red-mapau (*Myrsine Urvillei*), milk-wood, ribbon-wood (*Plagianthus betulinus*), fuchsia, or kohutuhutu (*Fuchsia excorticata*), kowhai (*Sophora tetraptera*), horoeka, or lancewood (*Pseudopanax crassifolium*), stink-wood, or pipipiro (*Coprosma fetidissima*), makomako (*Aristolelia racemosa* and *Aristolelia fruticosa*), mikimiki (*Coprosma linariifolia*), and *Carpodetus serratus* are to be found, in addition to the following:—

4. *Black-pine* (Matai).—This is a hard wood, at one time extensively used for railway-sleepers; but it appears that the Railway Department found it faulty, and it is now no longer used for that purpose. It is still used in small quantities for foundations of buildings, but at the present time its chief use is for fencing. In the North Island it is converted into weatherboards and flooring, and, next to red-pine, it is the most suitable timber we have for that purpose. (Vide photograph opposite page 57.)

2. *Totara*.—This is one of the most useful hardwoods in the Dominion. It is not by any means plentiful. Its chief use is for railway-sleepers, piles and foundations, bottom plates, and window-sills for buildings. It has a peculiar oily nature, and takes paint badly, but otherwise it is a very fine timber for general joinery. It is also used and is suitable for bridge-construction, fencing-posts, telegraph-poles, &c. It is, however, not suitable for bridge-decking, where much heavy traffic passes, as it wears quickly, and has a low transverse strength. Totara knots, especially those of what is known in Southland as “white-totara,” are used in cabinet-work, usually in the form of veneers, which are very handsome.

25. *Red-pine* (Rimu).—This timber is chiefly used for building purposes. It may safely be said that 80 per cent. of the timber used in buildings is red-pine, which is eminently suitable for the purpose, being tough and durable, besides being a handsome wood for inside finishing. It is also extensively used for cabinet-work, as it takes polish or oil finish exceedingly well; indeed, heart-figure red-pine takes a leading place amongst the handsomest timbers of the world. When grown on ridges and high country, the heartwood appears to last quite as long as totara for fencing purposes, and it is worth using in bridge-work at its present price.

26. *White-pine* (Kahikatea).—This is a most useful timber for boxes and cases of all kinds, being free to work, and very clean in appearance. It is largely used throughout Australasia for butter-boxes, as, in addition to its clean white appearance, it has the great advantage of not tainting the butter in the slightest degree. It is also largely used for cheese-cases, boxes for confectionery and stationery, cases for fruit, frozen rabbits, poultry, &c., and staves for casks. As a building-timber it is not in favour, as it is subject to destruction by an insect known here as “white-pine grub,” or “borer.”

27. *Miro*.—This is a good timber for studs, rafters, &c., and flooring of buildings, and is generally used for these purposes. It stands well under heavy traffic, and is therefore very suitable for bridge-decking and flooring of stores. It is unsuitable for furnishing and cabinetmaking.

*Birch*.—As in the case of pines, there are several varieties of this timber. The variety most commonly met with in this district is the brown birch.

12. *Red-birch*.—This is a superior class of timber, and much more durable than the brown or white. It is not so plentiful, and is much more difficult of access, consequently its chief use is for fencing purposes. The *Fagus fusca* obtained in the Cold Lakes District has been found very suitable for bridge-work, as it is very durable, and will stand a high transverse strain.

13. *White-birch*.—This is rather an inferior kind of wood, decay setting in very quickly. It is only suitable for case-making. When put in while green, as props in a wet mine, it will last a long time, and is suitable for log-culverts in wet places.