

Cattle-raising is the main industry and some fine mobs go out to Wataroa sale and Ross railway-yards. It takes six weeks to drive them out from Okuru along bush tracks, across rivers, and finally by road to the market. But deer are menacing the pastures, and unless they can be culled satisfactorily the future of the cattle industry is not too bright, according to some settlers. They are menacing the stands of timber, too, by eating away the undergrowth about the trees. Some residents declare that the bush where it was once impenetrable is now more like a pine forest.

Roading will help to solve this problem. As the Haast Pass Road has climbed over the top of the pass the pastures handy to the road have become almost as lush as they were many years ago before the deer began to eat them back. Roothing makes deer-stalking easier work, and the quarry have withdrawn into less accessible country.

There was a cheese-factory at Okuru fifteen years ago and its cheese was graded first quality in England. They milked one hundred and fifty cows there then, but lack of access crippled the infant industry and the factory closed down. Now some of the settlers are turning their eyes towards the sea rather than to the land. There is money in whitebait, both fresh and canned. One family caught and canned many tons of it last season. Admittedly the run of the fish was phenomenal last year, but the old heads think that there is a future in canning the blue cod caught along the coast and the crayfish of which there are thousands in Jackson's Bay.

Timber is the subject of much argument. The expert's survey of the amount of millable timber is far more conservative than that of the local enthusiasts. Still, what timber is available will be most valuable in industry (most of it is white-pine), and when the road is through to Jackson's Bay, where there is a wharf and the best harbour on the Coast, it can be felled and

shipped out from there.

The roads were under way when the war began. Even now there is not a lot to be done to link the Haast with Jackson's Bay, a distance of thirty-five miles. The rivers have been well bridged (two bridges are yet to be completed) and the road links between them are almost finished. The work of bridging the Haast—a two-year job—and carrying the road through to Paringa along the surveyed route is more formidable. It is likely that the connection with Otago will be completed first. When both roads are open—and the settlers hope that this will be soon after the war—not only will some promising country be opened up, but the round trip of the South Island will be possible. From the scenic and tourist angle the new road will be amongst New Zealand's best and the indirect benefit to South Westland will be considerable.

"Nolan's Cooe" —a stick of gelignite used to attract the ferryman or anyone else hidden by the all-enveloping forests—is not heard in South Westland these days. When the new roads are opened that ingenious signal will be only a distant echo of the old days. But to those who pioneered the last of New Zealand's backblocks even such a distant echo will awake memories of flooded rivers forded on horseback. It will remind them also that dreams do sometimes come true.

