

In the spring and early summer, when the warm nor-west rains melt the snow that has fallen during the winter, very severe floods occur, and the force of the river-current is then very fast. In normal times the river discharges into the sea at the rate of about ten thousand tons of water per minute, but in very heavy flood this amount may rise as high as a quarter of a million tons!

As in the case of most New Zealand rivers, there is, at the mouth, a bar formed by the drift of sand and shingle up the coast from the south. In normal times the force of the river-current is not strong enough to sweep this material out to sea, and so, until the piers were built at the mouth, shingle spits were formed across the entrance, and confined the outlet. When the next heavy flood came this outlet was too small for the huge volume of water, and so the river broke through the spit in some other place, forming a new exit. Thus the position of the river mouth was constantly changing.

In spite of these troubles many ships did cross the bar when the gold diggings were at their height, but in those days the vessels were of light draught. Sir John Coode was invited to Hokitika to give his advice as to the best means of improving the port, and he visited the place in 1879. By this time, however, the town was on the decline, and the revenue of the port was declining also.

The first task was to fix the harbour mouth to prevent the constant changes. There was, however, this difficulty: the entrance were too wide the river would be unable to keep the channel scoured, whereas if it were too narrow there would be a danger in time of flood. After studying the matter very closely, Sir John Coode decided that the width should not be more than six hundred feet, but he said that this might be reduced later on if it was found it could be done with safety. At first the piers were placed more than six hundred feet apart, but it has been found that a much less width is needed even than Sir John Coode thought, and when improvements were made about twelve years ago the distance between the piers was reduced to four hundred feet.

The next trouble was to find a suitable material for the piers. No good stone was to be found close by, so that he advised the use of wooden piles. A line of hardwood piles from Australia was driven in, but at once the marine borers attacked the piles, which were soon rotten, and the first storm broke them away. It was found that the heart timber of rimu procured locally gave better service.

The driving-in of this line of piles stopped the drift up the coast, and at once the sea began to encroach on the town. Several times the main street—Revell street—was in danger. About ten years ago, just after further additions had been made to the piers, the sea, during a heavy storm, swept in under the shops on the western side, and traces of the damage done is still to be seen. The danger was averted by driving in several lines of piles at right angles to the beach, to trap the incoming waves and coastal currents. These piles have also trapped the drifting sand, so that a fine beach has now been built up.

Timber, however, is not as durable in water as rock or cement, and trouble has often been caused by the rotting of piles or breakage by heavy seas. Nor do such walls confine the river-current to the same extent as stone walls. The revenue of the port, however, is too small to allow the Harbour Board to embark on any costly scheme.

As a result of these drawbacks, Grey-mouth has taken most of the shipping, and has become the chief port on the West Coast. It is likely to remain so, for coal is more constant in its returns than gold; but it is possible that even the large goldfields may be opened up, and Hokitika may at some future date regain a little of her great prosperity of the past.

COMMUNICATIONS OF WESTLAND.

A DIFFICULT PROBLEM.

BAD ROADS AND NO BRIDGES.

The social and economic progress of Westland was necessarily bound up with the development of communications with the rest of the colony. At first, the sea was the sole medium of communication with the outside world.

Many Shipping Disasters.

In the early days of the rush the ships to the port were all crowded with passengers. At one time, in September, 1865, the Alhambra, Egmont, Barwon, Gothenburg, Manukau, and twenty-five others were en route to Hokitika. On September 28th in that year there were twenty-one vessels in port, while on one occasion in 1866 fifty vessels were in port at once. On October 7th, 1865, thirteen vessels attempted to cross the bar, all being successful except the last. The bar was the cause of innumerable disasters to shipping. A stranger visiting Hokitika for the first time, and not previously apprised of the unenviable notoriety which the place had gained for itself, would have been struck with astonishment at the multitude of wrecks and remains of wrecks with which the beach was covered. From the entrance to the river to where the Montezuma had been cast high and dry on the sands the picture was one that could not be equalled in the colony, and perhaps not in the world. In one spot the last remnants of the "Oak" might be observed, showing, even then, how well and faithfully she must have been built; further on, a confused mass of ruin, a heap of splintered planks and ribs, marked the place where the "Sir Francis Drake" and the "Rosella" finally succumbed to the force of the waves. Still further on could be seen the masts of the "Titania," and nearer home, what was left of the steamship "New Zealand" supplied a painful reminder of the dangers of Hokitika. Everywhere, from the water's edge to the top of the spit, were scattered portions of the luckless vessels which had gone to pieces.

Naturally shipping owners looked round to see how they could minimise the dangers of the trade which was bringing them small fortunes, but which was uncomfortably risky. The port was indebted to a Victorian firm for the possession of a tug-boat, a serviceable and handy craft—the "Yarra"—which was made available for towing and lightening vessels. Considerable improvements were made in the harbour accommodation, and the navigation of the bar became a much safer proceeding.

The Trans-Alpine Road.

Meanwhile there was much agitation in Canterbury for the formation of a road to the Coast. "The Press" urged the necessity of forming this road im-

mediately, and pointed out that the number of men engaged on the work, 300, was little more than half the number that could profitably be employed in pushing forward the works more rapidly. The Canterbury Government, on realising that it had such a revenue-producing country as Westland within its boundaries, quickly completed the work, which was a great feat of engineering skill. It cost about £150,000. The journey across the Alps was from Hokitika across the Arahura, and via Staffordtown up to Jackson's, thence through the famous Otira Gorge, over Arthur's Pass into the Bealey Flat, fording the Waimakariri and making the Bealey township and post and telegraph station the end of the first day's journey. Thence along the bank of the big river to Cass, and subsequently over Porter's Pass to Springfield, whence it became an easy and level road down the Coal Track through Courtenay, Yaldhurst, and Riccarton, into the headquarters of coaching in Christchurch, Cashel street.

"Maccaroni Squash."

Outside the main road, the roads on the Coast were in a very bad condition during the early years of the rushes. Packers found great difficulty in getting from the beach to the Waima, a distance of five miles, but reckoned twelve. Several diggers, unfortunate in their search for gold, took to packing, and amongst others, Charles L. Money, known as "Charley the Packer," from whose book, "Knocking About New Zealand," the following is extracted:—"At this time the road from the beach up to the township, a distance of twelve miles, passing, as it did, the whole way through heavy bush and thick undergrowth, and crossing and recrossing the creek bed every 100 yards, was in a condition perfectly inconceivable by those who have not been to a great rush on the West Coast diggings in New Zealand. Roots of all sizes, torn and mangled when small into a sort of maccaroni squash, and when large remaining a dead hindrance to both horses and men, caused the mud ploughed by cattle and pack-horses to assume the appearance of a torrent; so bad was it that the whole distance was marked by the bones of dead animals. The price given for the package of stores was £3 per hundred pounds for the twelve miles."

Telegraph Communication.

In July, 1865, the much-desired and anxiously-awaited telegraph to Christchurch was taken seriously in hand by the Government, and one of the local papers remarked "a chance exists that it may now be completed before the necessity for it has passed away." Evidently the possibility of the settlement becoming permanent had not entered the writer's head. At any rate on February 6th, 1866, the interprovincial telegraph, connecting the West Coast with the various capitals and leading towns of the Middle Island provinces, was opened to public use, and various messages were sent from Hokitika to Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill. On September 4th, 1868, telegraph communication between Westport and Hokitika was established.

The story of the establishment of railway communication with Westland is told in another place.

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOLDFIELD.

AN HISTORIC EVENT.

Thursday, March 2nd, 1865.—Proclamation: Whereas by an Act of the General Assembly, entitled "The Gold Fields Act, 1862," it is enacted that it shall be lawful for the Governor from time to time, by Proclamation, to constitute and appoint any portion of the Colony to be a Gold Field under the provision of the said Act, and the limits of such Gold Field from time to time to alter as occasion may require.

Now, therefore, I, Samuel Bealey, Superintendent of the Province of Canterbury, do hereby, in pursuance of the power and authority so vested in me as aforesaid, proclaim that part of the Province of Canterbury bounded on the north by the river Grey and the southern boundary of the Province of Nelson, on the west by the sea, on the south by the river Wanganui and a line drawn from its source to the nearest summit of the snowy range; on the east by the summits of the dividing range, or Southern Alps, to be a Gold Field within the meaning of the Act, to be called "The West Canterbury Goldfield."

Given under my hand and issued under the Public Seal of the Province of Christchurch, this second day of March, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-five.

S. BEALEY,
Superintendent.

HOKITIKA.

NAMING THE STREETS.

The following notes on the street nomenclature of Hokitika are taken from a pamphlet by Mr D. J. Evans, of Hokitika, whose interest in the early history of Westland is well known. The pamphlet is dedicated to the honoured memory of the early pioneers of Westland:

"Daring and conquering, though not sharing in the Afterglow."

In the naming of the streets of Hokitika a very happy system was followed, and the town is honoured indeed by having in the names of its streets the closest association with many splendid men who in their day and generation were outstanding citizens in the young colony, and whose work in the various walks of official life was of special prominence.

The main thoroughfare, Revell street, was named after William Horton Revell, who came to Hokitika in the earliest days as agent for the Provincial Government of Canterbury. The short-street off Revell street, known as Camp street, was so called because in the earliest days, before the forest was cleared, the police camp was adjacent thereto.

Off Camp street leads Wharf street, which, as its name implies, leads to the wharf on Gibson's quay. The wharf in the very early days was a scene of very busy activity, and photography has preserved for posterity many inspiring scenes of the crowded shipping moored along the wharf.

There is another small street now

in the same locality known as Beach street. Its name is associated with the particular location which it serves. Now it is mainly residential, but once it was a busy commercial thoroughfare with bonds and warehouses, and extended much further down the beach for the river in the early days made its way to sea very much further south.

Gibson's quay, it is almost certain, was called after Captain Gibson, the then harbourmaster of Lyttelton.

Weld street was one of the four streets of the town named after notably prominent politicians of that period. It was named after the leader of the Weld Ministry, Sir Frederick Weld, who was in office in the stormy days when the seat of Government was moved from Auckland to Wellington. The Weld Ministry was defeated on the casting vote of the Speaker, and was succeeded by the Stafford Ministry.

So we have the name of Stafford street accounted for. Sir Edward William Stafford was superintendent of the Nelson Province, and was twice Premier of New Zealand within thirteen years, first for a period of five years and then for a period of four years.

Sewell street is another connexion with a name distinguished in the early political life of the colony—that of Mr Henry Sewell.

Then as the fourth statesman of the time we have Sir William Fitzherbert's name drawn on for the street (Fitzherbert street), which has become the main thoroughfare linking up the great north and great south roads.

Next we have Bealey street, named after his Honour Samuel Bealey, who was Superintendent of Canterbury in 1886, when the petition for the Borough of Hokitika was lodged. The petition in point of fact was addressed to his Honour.

Hall street was obviously named after him whom so many of this generation knew later as Sir John Hall. When Hokitika was laid out, Hon. John Hall was a member of the Provincial Executive, and took a very interesting part in the early fortunes of Westland. Ultimately Sir John Hall became Premier of New Zealand.

Brittan street it may be justly assumed was named after Joseph Brittan, who was a member of the Canterbury Board of Education from June, 1865, and was identified with educational matters on the Coast. Brittan street appropriately leads to the present site of the public school.

Sale street recalls the most memorable of names associated with the birth of Hokitika—or for the matter of that with Westland at large. He was known here officially as Warden Sale, but he was more often dubbed "King" Sale, for he was a veritable Pool Bah in those early days, being everything the town and district needed in the way of leadership and direction. . . . Hokitika is becoming a town of memorials, and it is suggested that the life and work here of George Samuel Sale is worthy of some recognition, however simple in form that memorial might be. . . .

And so we pass on to Rolleston street; this it is very easy to decide was named after William Rolleston, who was Provincial Secretary for Canterbury at the time Hokitika came into being. Davie street was called after Mr

Cyrus Davie, who was Commissioner of Waste Lands in 1866, in the Canterbury district.

Edward Jollie was Provincial Secretary to Samuel Bealey, Superintendent, in 1866, when the petition went forward from Hokitika asking for the municipality. From this fact we may take it Jollie street received its title.

Hoffman and Livingstone streets have not been specially associated with any celebrities in those far off days.

Now comes a group of four streets, the names or location of which will be known to but few. The streets are Harper, Dalton, McDermott, and Beswick. They are all adjacent to the Hokitika racecourse on the upper side of Hampden street. Harper street abuts the racecourse grounds. This street was not named after the first resident Anglican clergyman as might be supposed, but after Charles John Harper (possibly a relative of the clergyman, who was Commissioner of the Kakāra road district at the time the town of Hokitika was founded.

Beswick street was doubtless named after Samuel Beswick, who was the first coroner of Hokitika, or Joseph Beswick, who was Secretary of Public Works. The former Beswick is favoured, because McDermott street was no doubt named after Dr. McDermott who (along with Charles Lloyd Morrice) appears to have been the first medical man here to submit his papers for registration to Mr Sale, R.M. D. Stuart, Esq., of Timaru, writes:—"With reference to Dalton street, a resident in that locality, Mr Michael Dalton, had a hotel in Hampden street. He was a grand figure of a man. He occasionally gave Shakespearian readings. He

was afterwards well known in Reefton."

While referring to the comparatively unknown streets of the town, there are two others, or strictly speaking one, for the second street has been officially closed now for some time. Haast street and Ross street are the two referred to. Both were laid off at angles in order to facilitate the driving of stock through the town. Haast street no doubt derived its name from Sir Julius von Haast, scientist and explorer, after whom so many physical features in the South Island are named. Ross street was named after George Arthur Emilus Ross, who became Provincial Treasurer in Canterbury when Mr Sale resigned in April, 1865, to take up his work in Hokitika and Westland generally. Probably the town of Ross was named after the same official.

Tancred street was named after Henry John Tancred, who was appointed Deputy Superintendent of Canterbury in January, 1866.

Hamilton street was so named after William John Hamilton, Collector of Customs, Christchurch. Hamilton street led to the original Customs Office here, and the earliest photographs show it was not joined to Revell street as at present.

Hampden, Tudor and Spencer streets cannot be fitted in with the available records of public officials of the period dealt with, but they are evidently the names of individuals who were considered important enough to be associated with the work in hand.

Park street was so called because it led the way to the public park of something like 200 acres, which the founders of Hokitika placed on the outskirts of the town's eastern boundary, and which is now a municipal endowment. In addition Park street leads past Whitcombe and Howitt squares, each of eleven acres.

Whitcombe square was named after Henry Whitcombe, the ill-fated road surveyor, who was drowned in the Teremakau river in 1863.

Howitt square was likewise named after a lost explorer—Charles Howitt, who was drowned in Lake Brunner in September, 1863.

Cass square was named after Thomas Cass, who was Commissioner of Crown Lands in Canterbury before Cyrus Davie.