

WESTLAND.

THE SOUTH WESTLAND (or ROSS)
CURE.

Ross is the terminus of the railway. A coach road extends for 75 miles southward to Waihao Gorge, with branches varying in length up to about ten miles. Leaving Ross the traveller feels at once that he is entering an undeveloped country. After three miles the Mikonui River is crossed and the road at once plunges into virgin bush, winding up hill and down dale through avenues of lofty rimu, miro, kahikatea and other timbers whose tall stems naked, or clothed in creepers rise eighty or an hundred feet before breaking into arching boughs often meeting across the roadway.

Here a break in the timber gives a glimpse of distant blue sea and gleaming white surf; there in another direction is seen a beautiful lake set amid bush-clad hills; again the distant view of snowy mountain peaks rank upon rank towards distant Canterbury; here the road sweeps round a rocky cutting and over a rumbling bridge high above some foaming mountain torrent; there a tumultuous cataract rushes roaring towards the sea. On every hand native birds abound, pigeons, ducks, swans, pukaki, bitterns, sailing stately past, fantails, wrens, and tom tits, tuis, paradise ducks, etc., etc.

Then came the road travellers, first a Public Works roadman with dray and horses, or more commonly wheelbarrow and picks and shovels; then a drover with dogs and a mob of fat cattle from some place a hundred miles away; next a farmer's gig, a motor car, a freight waggon, a milk cart going to the factory, a mob of bleating sheep, children on their way to school, the mail coach piled high with goods of all kinds.

The first settlement is at Ferguson's nine miles out. Regular services should be here, but for want of men nothing is done yet.

Seventeen miles out is Waitaha settlement, off the main road is the picturesque Waitaha Valley with its rugged hills on either side and snowy mountains at the Valley's head. Some twenty farms are here. In 1918 a few services were held with encouraging results but in 1919 I found myself unable to continue the work.

Harihari is the centre of the largest settlement of all. Here some fifty farms are grouped in a large flat about fifteen miles long. The post office is 30 miles from Ross. There is an hotel, an excellent store, a

cheese factory, supplied by some 800 cows. The church, dedicated in the name of St. Cuthbert, is able to seat some fifty-five adults, and needs enlarging urgently. This settlement should be the centre of the South Westland Cure with Vicar and at least one assistant priest resident here, and one other at Ross.

Two services each month are provided at present. Surely where congregations of fifty assemble there should be at least one service every Sunday. From Harihari southwards the only other religious body ministering to the people is the Roman Catholic: all the rest are dependent upon us.

This means that in Harihari alone over forty households look to us for spiritual sustenance.

Whataroa settlement stretches over a length of nearly twenty miles. The new church of St. Luke is about fifty-five miles from Ross. It is not yet finished. Generous aid in the erection of this building was given by people in Canterbury and elsewhere, largely through the exertions of the Revd. H. W. Monaghan, my predecessor in this cure. In the January issue, I remarked that St. Luke's Church at Waimea was removed for use at Whataroa. This statement is literally correct, but as it seems to have been misunderstood, I may now explain that the Waimea Vestry of 1917, wishing to help Whataroa with material when they could not give money, placed their old building at the disposal of the Whataroa people. This gift was worth quite £130, quite the largest contribution made. The new church owes its roof, most of its glass, all its seats, and its service books, to the unselfish acton of the Waimea people.

There are about sixteen families of church people at Whataroa. The Romanists there outnumber us, and have a small building of their own, their only chapel south of Ross. The cheese making industry is here very large, and will be multiplied many times as settlement increases.

Below Whataroa is a little seaport called Okarito, with nowadays only a very small population. Services are held there in the Magistrate's Court House at intervals of two or three months.

At Waiho (75 miles), services are held at intervals of two months in Mr. J. W. Graham's Hotel near the Franz Joseph Glacier. This is the terminus of the coach and motor road. Beyond this point unbridged rivers and unformed roads require saddle horse traffic. Even the weekly mails go by pack horse for another hundred miles beyond Waiho.

The congregation at evensong at Waiho is commonly twenty to forty. At the Eucharist, from six to sixteen.

Wehaka is the next settlement (about 92 miles). All the settlers are Romanists.

At Karangarua 105 miles from Ross there are two or three households all our people. Services are held in Mrs Scott's house at intervals of two months. From this point the tourist track over the Copland Pass runs to the Mount Cook Hermitage.

oftener than about once each year. I was there last in March 1919. Think of the situation of these people. Does it not appeal to your sympathy? We have about five families here and a few Romanists. Okuru has caused us more heart ache than any other settlement in this gigantic cure, but I cannot find how to do more for them at such a distance. I always go there by steamer from Hokitika.

South of Okuru, settlement is going on as far as Martin's Bay some sixty

CANON AND MRS J. W. STACK.

The last mail has brought a letter written by Mrs Stack on the day before she died (December 2), which will not be without interest to the friends of the much respected Canon and his aged helpmate. He died October 13, at 85, and Mrs Stack, December 2, at 91. She writes to a local resident: My daughter has just read to me the interesting account in the papers of my dear husband's life and work in New Zealand. I feel so happy and grateful that his



The Old Vicarage, Ross. Built about 1870.



St Paul's Parish Church, Ross, built about 1867, also Parish Hall, built about 1915.

At Manakiaiu (113 miles), the Eucharist is celebrated for two families every two months.

At Bruce Bay (Makawhio River), there is a settlement consisting mainly of Maoris all of whom are church people. Almost all over fourteen years of age are communicants, and prepared for confirmation, though not any have been confirmed. It is impossible to get the Bishop here and very difficult to get them to Waiho, 42 miles distant, the furthest place to which the Bishop goes.

At Mahitahi settlement (129 miles), all the people are Romanists, except a few who go to Bruce Bay Church.

Between Mahitahi and Haast lies a lovely stretch of some 56 miles of road without any settlement or homestead.

Haast (about 185 miles) has one family of church people.

Okuru is the furthest south settlement. It is a sea port about 200 miles from Ross by land, and 130 miles from Hokitika by sea. No Vicar of Ross has ever been able to visit Okuru

miles further, but there are no women or children more than six miles beyond Okuru. The old Jackson's Bay settlement is without inhabitants, though stores are sometimes landed there for cattlemen or bush fellers. Some day, please God my clerical brethren in Canterbury will be stirred by the romance of this work, and the strong and youthful of them will here offer Him their best endowment of the early years of their ministry, their youth, health, and strength. Here the young parson is "on the ball" all the time, working it may be to a break down, possibly to his death as John Lock did, drowned in the Whanganui River seven years ago this month. Anyhow it is a man's work, a work worthy of God's young priests; would that more of them could see that.

To my lay brethren I may say that though God may not call you to personal service here, yet you have your part to do for Him in supporting the work by your alms and not less by your prayers. May God stir you to give to this work until you feel that if poorer in purse yet of a surety are richer in spirit.

C. L. WILSON.

MELANESIAN MISSION

The monthly meeting for Intercession will be held in St. Michael's Church on Friday, March 12th, at 7.30 p.m.