

## APPENDIX B.

## KAPITI ISLAND RESERVE.

(H. W. C. MACKINTOSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

It is pleasing to report that the year under review has been an excellent one for Kapiti Reserve. The weather was ideal not only from the point of view of a plenteous rainfall, but also on account of the fact that there were very few gales to interfere with the growth of the vegetation. Even in the driest parts of the reserve there was no evidence of wilting, and plant-life has made remarkable headway. During the year a number of large dead rata-trees, a prominent feature of the Kapiti forest, have fallen and have done a certain amount of damage to the bush, but this will soon be repaired as other trees take their places. Many years ago, when the island was used for grazing, a strip, 2 or 3 chains wide, of the protecting fringe was destroyed to allow the passing of sheep along the eastern side of the island, and this had a disastrous effect on the bush thus exposed. During his seventeen years as Caretaker, Mr. Wilkinson has devoted a great deal of his time to repairing this damage, and with the help of friends and valuable assistance given by the Wellington Acclimatization Society he has achieved considerable success. At the south end, where the largest area of grass existed, regeneration of the native bush is highly satisfactory, and in this area many thousands of trees have been planted in the last few years. As an indication of the regeneration in this area two birds, the kiwi and the robin, which are seldom to be found except in dense bush, are known to be there. There is a nice flat of about 8 acres at Wharekohu where the trees grow exceptionally well. This area was drained by one Andrew Brown, who farmed 617 acres here about one hundred years ago. There is also exceptional growth in Taepiro Valley, perhaps the richest ground on Kapiti, and it was here where the Maori was supposed to have grown most of his potatoes which were supplied to the whalers of Kapiti and Cloudy Bay. The steep western side of the reserve still presents a barren appearance, but a closer inspection reveals that even here considerable regeneration is taking place. The destruction of vermin has been carried on with the same persistence as in former years, and many rats have been destroyed by the trapper, Mr. Hughes. Fewer opossums have been taken, and it is seldom now that any damage done by these animals is met with.

The Caretaker desires to thank the following donors :—

Mr. L. O. H. Tripp and Mr. H. L. Hull, Wellington	..	Wheat for the birds.
Plant Preservation Society, Lower Hutt	.. ..	Plants.
Mr. J. Bendely, Auckland	.. ..	Plants.
Forestry Department, Auckland	.. ..	Seeds.
Mr. Donaldson, Caretaker, Trounson Kauri Reserve	.. ..	Plants.
Mr. W. Knight, Paraparaumu Beach	.. ..	Seedlings.
Mr. S. A. Wilkinson, Paraparaumu Beach	.. ..	Plants.
Mr. Max Roberts, Kilbirnie, Wellington	.. ..	Plant.
Mr. A. Ainsworth, Kilbirnie, Wellington	.. ..	Plants.
Mr. Morris Jones, Kelburn, Wellington	.. ..	Plants.

I have to again express my entire satisfaction with the able and painstaking manner in which the Caretaker, Mr. A. S. Wilkinson, and his assistant, Mr. Geo. Hughes, carry out their duties.

Appended hereto are extracts from the Caretaker's annual report :—

“ Taken all round, it has been a poor year for berries, especially for those species which are the mainstay of the pigeon. This failure probably accounts for the non-breeding of this bird during the late season, for we knew of only one nest. We did not notice any young pigeons, and such a thing is new in our experience. In previous years we have always had a few nests to watch. It is during the nesting period of the pigeon that the karaka produces its fruit, which this bird is very fond of. They not only gorge themselves on karaka berries, but they also feed them to their young, even when the chicks are only a fortnight old. This year the karaka failed badly. It is true that one would come across a heavily-laden tree here and there, but the majority of them had very little to show, while some had none at all. Neither did the matai have as many berries as in former years, but as there are very few adult trees of this species on the island it would make very little difference to the birds. The miro seems to have done better and some of them are still carrying a little fruit. Another tree that has done better than most is the tawa, and pigeons are now feeding on its fruit. Although a few titoki berries can be found under some of the trees, there are not many of these about. It is the same with the motipo and toru. Neither of these produced anything like a normal crop. The same may be said of the ngaio, whose fruit always attracts large crowds of starlings. These unwelcome visitors soon strip all the berries off a tree. At the present time we have two species of trees that are covered with berries. These are the porokaiwhiria and houhou; but the birds do not seem to like them, for they are generally left until the last. We have often noticed pigeons feeding on leaves of the convolvulus and other plants, which cannot be very sustaining, and yet not many chains away stood porokaiwhiria loaded with fruit. The kaikomako, the horopito, the hangehange, and all the members of the coprosma family had good crops of fruit. All the coprosmas are good on a bird sanctuary, as there always seems to be some species that ripen their fruit at different periods of the year.