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THE TAKAHEA

(*Notornis mantelli*)

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FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY

OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc.)

Head Office: "Evening Post" Buildings, Willis Street, Wellington, N.Z. P.O. Box 631.
Telegraphic Address: "Forestbird."

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APPEAL FOR BEQUESTS.

Is there any cause more worthy of bequests by public-spirited citizens than the objectives of the Forest and Bird Protection Society, which is working wholly and solely for the welfare of New Zealand, present and future? Here is a suggested form of bequest:—

"I give and bequeath the sum of..... to the Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand (Incorporated), and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the said Society shall be a complete discharge to my executors for the legacy hereby given to such Society."

The work and record of the Society, the personnel of its membership and Executive are a good guarantee that the best possible use will be made of such bequests.

CALL FOR SANCTUARIES.

The Society would also welcome the responsibility of administering suitable sanctuaries for land or sea birds, provided that a small annuity is added for the payment of a caretaker. *Such sanctuaries could be named after the donor, and would thus be a perpetuation of his name as a saviour of New Zealand's forest and bird life.* It is suggested that such sanctuaries should be administered in a manner to ensure their return to their original and natural conditions as nearly as possible.

Affiliated with the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the British Empire (Patron, His Majesty King George VI) and with the International Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds.

EDITORIAL

"Red Gods" for Sport and Ruin for the Country

SINCE 1930, when "open slather" was proclaimed against the "red gods," it has been the accepted policy of the country that the deer are a menace and must be exterminated, if ever such a result can be achieved. At the famous conference held at Christchurch in that year it was agreed that this was necessary for the preservation of our native forests and saving the country from consequent erosion and final ruin.

This policy has been in operation now for some eighteen years, and has been so vigorously pursued by the Wild Life Branch of the Internal Affairs Department that good results have been obtained. Indeed, so successful have been the operations conducted in some districts that the deer there are now threatened with extinction and have become so hard to find that stalkers have become alarmed. They now seek to change the national policy from indiscriminate into discriminate culling.

Such a change of policy, of course, would be revolutionary, and must be strenuously opposed by all lovers of our native flora and fauna, and also by all those who are seriously concerned about the vast extent to which erosion has already taken place. Seeing that the deer have been so largely responsible for bringing about this disastrous state of affairs, it is surprising that the deer stalkers should make such a demand, but nevertheless it must be taken seriously, judging by what was disclosed at the annual conference of the New Zealand Deer Stalkers Association at Invercargill in July last. Most of the proceedings were conducted in secret, but in opening the meeting the President of the Association, Dr. G. B. Orbell, read a telegram stating that "in the Rotorua-Taupo district deer and pigs were on a par with the moa." "That," he commented, "seems to be a tribute to the Department's policy of culling." Excellent. But then he said that "things appear to be shaping satisfactorily"—meaning the negotiations with the Department to retain deer for sport. So they were, judging by the remarks made by the Head of the Wild Life Branch of the Internal Affairs Department.

Discussing the results of the 1930 conference in Christchurch, this officer is reported by the "Southland Times" to have said:

> "It was decided at that conference that protection of deer must go and that drastic action must be taken to deal with them as a menace. If it had been possible at that time for the then Minister of Internal Affairs to have pressed a button and killed all the deer in New Zealand, then I believe he would have pressed that button. Control measures were introduced, but later we came to take a more lenient view, namely, that there might be deer for sport provided we could get the numbers of deer down, keep them under control and remove the term 'menace' from them. I think that in some areas at least we are reaching the stage where the more lenient policy might be put into operation, whereas a few years ago the Government was all out to exterminate the deer."

This is a remarkable statement for him to have made, and shows in what direction the wind is blowing. Many people will want to know when the Department "came to take a more lenient view" and who was influential in bringing this about. Also why was the "more lenient view" never announced? When the 1929-30 anti-deer campaign was in full swing it was represented by opponents that the deer were so numerous, so widespread and so difficult to get at that they could never be exterminated, and in any case vastly reducing their numbers would cost an enormous sum of money. Now when in some districts deer are hard to find and stalking has become stalking indeed, stalkers are demanding that some must be left for sport!

No one wishes to disparage the stalker, his desire for the outdoor life, his love of the chase, and his sportsmanship. These are all characteristics that go to build up a virile, hardy and self-reliant manhood, but it may well be asked is he not being selfish

in urging his present claim? Deer were never meant for this country; they are foreign to everything an all-wise Providence intended; in their native habitats there are predatory animals to keep their number always in check, and we have none here to keep them down—except the stalker, who seeks only the magnificent head.

Considering the few deer that were imported into this country during the 60-year period from 1850 to 1910, and the vast numbers to which they have increased today notwithstanding "open slather" and vigorous culling; considering also the very definite menace they are to the future prosperity of the country and the heavy expenditure that has already been incurred in reducing their numbers—considering these factors it will surely be agreed that it is the height of folly to desist from completely wiping out the herds in those districts where, as a result of wholesale killing, the deer are already scarce. Such a cessation in these areas could only result in their becoming infested again, further damage will be done to the country, and the State will be called upon for ever-recurring expenditure in keeping the numbers of these pests down.

It is manifest on the face of it that there is only one policy that can be pursued in the national interests. The aim must be to completely exterminate the deer in those districts where they are now scarce, and then to extend the operation to other districts until the deer are wholly eliminated from the Dominion. If it be argued that this will "spoil sport" the answer is that the interests of the country are paramount. Again, if it be said that the stalkers are being deprived of out-door life, the reply is that there are plenty of opportunities for this nowadays in mountaineering, tramping and camping, none of which do any harm and all of which inspire love of country. The issue, in short, is whether the "red gods" are to be preserved for sport, and so allowed to continue their depredations to the ultimate ruin of the country.

Objects of the Society

To advocate and obtain efficient protection and preservation of our native forests and birds, enlisting the natural sympathy of our young, unity of control of all wild life, and the preservation of sanctuaries, scenic reserves, etc., in the native state.

COVER PICTURE (From a Water-colour by the late Miss L. A. Daff)

THE TAKAHEA *(Notornis mantelli)*

"Head and throat bluish black passing into dark indigo blue on the hind neck; back, rump, verditer green; greater coverts blue margined upper tail coverts, scapulars and lesser wing coverts bronzy green, the feathers tipped with bronzy green. Foreneck, breast and sides of body indigo blue; abdomen and thighs bluish with verditer green; quills indigo blue; tail black; under tail coverts white. Bill: basal part bright red, outer part reddish pink. Feet reddish pink, claws horn colour."

—Dr. W. R. B. OLIVER, M.Sc.

EDITORIAL NOTE.—The late Mr. James Cowan, well known authority, supplied the following information in 1937:—

"Takahe," without the final "a," is an incorrect form of the native name of the *Notornis mantelli.* One bird-book compiler after another has copied the wrong spelling; none of the writers have gone to original sources—the Maoris of the far South, the last of the old learned men in Southland, bushmen and seal-hunters and bird-hunters of blended and Ngati-Mamoe and Ngai-Tahe, gave me much information about the Notornis mantelli and its habits and haunts. Williams' Maori Dictionary gives both forms.

THE NOTORNIS

THERE is no doubt that a stir was caused, first throughout New Zealand and later throughout the scientific world, when on Monday, 22nd November, the brief announcement appeared in the Press that Dr. G. B. Orbell had rediscovered the notornis surviving in the Fiordland National Park.

Fifty years have elapsed since 1898, when the bird was last positively seen, although there have been many rumours and unauthenticated reports of it. In that year a specimen was caught by a dog belonging to two brothers named Ross, who were camping on the western shore of Lake Te Anau. Previous to that the only three occasions on which the bird was seen without doubt were at Resolution Island in 1849, when one was caught and eaten by some sealers—in 1851, when a Maori caught one on Secretary Island—and in 1879, when one was caught by a rabbiter's dog at the junction of the Mararoa and Waiau Rivers. As these four reports were of individual, *non-surviving* birds taken in widely distributed localities, at wide intervals of time, the recent capture of both a male and female bird together and their *release again in their accustomed habitat,* is an event of outstanding ornithological interest.

With bird lovers, the pleasure imparted by the stirring news of their discovery was quickly tinged with fears for the safety of these precious notornis survivors, and it was realised at the headquarters of our Society that action to secure for them protection from molestation was a matter of urgency. Therefore, after it had been ascertained that no legal provision existed whereby a portion of a National Park could be closed up, a deputation consisting of the President and Secretary waited upon the Hon. Mr. Parry, Minister of Internal Affairs, requesting his assistance in securing that an area including the whole of the western shores of Lake Te Anau and extending backwards to the summit of the Divide, consisting of about 320,000 acres, within which the notornis had been discovered, should be declared a Special Sanctuary under a strict entry-permit system. The Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs, and the Controller of the Wildlife Branch of the Internal Affairs Department were present at the interview. The Minister gave the deputation a sympathetic hearing, and it appears that the Lands Department was also sympathetic because on Monday, 29th November, the Minister of Lands, the Hon. Mr. Skinner, announced in the House that an area of 435,000 acres—more than the Society had suggested—had been declared a Sanctuary, which no one would be permitted to enter without a permit. So far so good, and it now remains to hope that the birds will be left in peace and allowed to work out their destiny without disturbance.

Protect Your Best Friends — Your Forests and Birds ——

Birds and Bush of the Kaimanawas

By DR. D. A. BATHGATE

EARLY in the present year I took part in a 10-day trip to the headwaters of the Ngaruroro River, which rises in the north-eastern end of the Kaimanawa Ranges. This river is one of the major rivers of the North Island and has its source almost from the middle of the island. It has watersheds in common with the following large rivers—the Waikato, Rangitikei, Tuki Tuki, Tutaekuri and Mohaka, and through an intermediate saddle with the Rangitaiki. It traverses the Auckland-Wellington, and later the Wellington-Hawke's Bay provincial boundaries, and finally breaks through the ranges to flow across Hawke's Bay and enter the sea at Clive—halfway between Napier and Hastings.

As an illustration of how the headwaters of this river may be considered to lie in the centre of the main watershed of the North Island, certain members of the party in one afternoon had a drink of water from branches of the Ngaruroro, Rangitikei and Waikato Rivers. When one realises where these rivers flow into the sea and how far their mouths are apart, one may well understand how extensive an area this river drains.

From Mt. Mangarahi at the head of the Ngaruroro River very extensive panoramic views can be obtained, ranging from Mounts Edgecumbe and Tarawera in the north to the Tararua Range in the south, and from the Titiokura saddle on the Napier-Taupo road in the east, to Lake Taupo and the peaks of the National Park in the west.

In its upper reaches, the Ngaruroro River is fed by tributaries which rise in beautiful beech forested gullies and gorges to form the parent stream which courses for miles along a tussock-clad open valley, at an elevation of over 3000 feet. Here the beech forests recede from the valley floor but persist on the ridges and the spurs.

In the middle part of its course the river enters a series of deep, rugged, bush-clad gorges to emerge finally into the rich farm lands of Hawke's Bay.

The beech forests of this region are not the best type of bush for bird life as they do not supply much variety of food. Compared with our mixed rain forests they offer a poor substitute except for one or two species of native birds.

THE DEER MENACE

The bush in all this region shows signs of extensive deer damage. Over a great extent of the area such species as the five-finger have been practically wiped out and many other trees have been extensively damaged. In traversing these forests we were appalled to note the extent of the death and destruction of the bush and to see the denudation of the forest floor by the deer, which are certainly noble looking animals. *But deer and native bush cannot live together for any long period. One or the other must go.* The deer cullers have been, and still are, doing efficient work in this region. Six years ago, when the writer was last in the area, more than one hundred deer were counted in the course of a single day's tramp in the upper river basin. On this last trip only 55 deer were counted in the whole 10 days. Much credit must be given to the Department of Internal Affairs and its officers and staff for using every endeavour to deal efficiently with the deer menace.

Our farthest out camp was pitched on the bush edge at Mount Mangarahi, close to the Tauranga-Taupo Divide. On a previous trip many wild cattle were seen in this bush. This time none were seen and no tracks noticed. This serves to confirm the statements of the back country people who state that where deer increase wild cattle tend to die out owing to the deer eating out the available food supply in the bush.

The bush on whose edge we pitched our top camp also showed extensive deer damage. There were no young trees—the forest floor was almost bare—even the species of hard fern present had been eaten down almost to the ground. Some of the large trees were scarred heavily by the rubbing of the deers' antlers. It was a saddening sight to realise that—uncontrolled—this beautiful forest was doomed to death and destruction through these animals, and even with heavy culling it will be many years before true regeneration is noticed.

Our party left from Hastings and proceeded along the Napier-Taihape road to the Owhaoko homestead, which is situated at an elevation of 3000 feet.

We left the homestead after lunch for the Golden Hills hut—16 miles away at the head of the Taruarau, a tributary of the Ngaruroro.

This hut is picturesquely situated at the edge of the beech forest which extends over the saddle into Gold Creek and the Ngaruroro basin. The first day's trip was through open tussock country with Ruapehu towering up into the western sky and the Golden Hills in sight ahead of us. These latter hills—foothills of the Kaimanawas—are covered with the beautiful red tussock and in certain lights appear red gold in colour. They are well named the Golden Hills. In ages past this country has been covered by repeated showers of hot pumice from the Taupo volcanoes, and in the banks of the streams and on the sides of the gullies remains of trees converted into charcoal by the various eruptions could be seen. On the first day three pairs of paradise duck were seen and several pairs of banded dotterels. The native lark or pipit was quite numerous, running along the track ahead of us and then flying for a short distance to run ahead again —a habit somewhat similar to the bird called the "road runner" in the U.S.A.

We arrived to the Golden Hills hut about 7.30 p.m. and were delighted to see a pair of native parrakeets feeding on the ground adjacent to the hut. We were not so pleased to notice a pair of Australian magpies in the same vicinity. These imported birds seem to have firmly established themselves in the back country and to have penetrated into what is left of our mountain forests—*much to the detriment of our native birds.*

The bush at the head of the Taruarau is beech forest. We had the impression that many of the trees in the bush were dying—possibly as the result of the third consecutive dry year and possibly also as the result of invasion by the larvae of beetles which were once kept in control by our now almost vanished native birds. No doubt the birds need the bush but the bush also needs the birds in order to survive.

It was pleasant to see that one species of bird could be described as plentiful. This was the New Zealand rifleman, the "titi pounamu" of the Maori. This, the smallest of our native birds, is one of the most delightful to observe. His colour is a soft greyish green with some golden feathers in the wing and a grey breast. Perhaps he was called a "rifleman" by the early settlers because members of the Rifle Brigade in the old British Army wore green jackets. His Maori name is more descriptive, the "titi" being an atempt to imitate his high-pitched note (tee!-tee!) and the "pounamu" the word used for greenstone and describing his colour.

We found these birds everywhere in the beech forests. They were never still, but constantly on the move up and around the trunks and branches of the trees searching every crevice and crack in the bark for grubs and insects. Their work in controlling the smaller pests must be invaluable.

The rifleman takes little notice of human beings—they seem to be so urgent in their search for food that they keep incessantly on the move. We were privileged to find a rifleman's nest. This was built in an old feeding box which had been constructed out of a packing case and sacking, nailed in to a beech tree at Boyd's hut. The nest was shown to us by a deer culler. On examining the nest we discovered a tragedy. A rat had found the nest and destroyed not only the eggs but also the parent bird who had been incubating the eggs. The remains of the egg shells were still in the nest along with pieces of the body and wings of the parent bird.

This pair of birds had the previous year actually built their nest inside the hut on the sill above the door and in full view of the two deer cullers who occupied the hut. They had laid their eggs and hatched out and reared two young ones. The only way into the hut was by a small crack above the door which they used. They showed no fear at all of the occupants of the hut and went about the business of nesting and rearing their family without taking any notice of the human beings.

The paradise duck seems to be holding its own in spite of shooters and other introduced enemies. They draw one's attention to their presence by the shrill cries of the light-headed female and the deep honking notes of the male bird. The presence of young was denoted by the frantic endeavours of one of the parents to draw us away on a false scent by fluttering around on the ground and dragging a wing as if sorely wounded or in great distress. On such occasions I have seen them luring dogs and humans right away from their family by a most finished and convincing display of acting.

We also saw grey ducks but only one blue duck. This latter bird, known to the Maoris as "whio," is a true bush lover. Where they are not disturbed they are very tame—so tame that when a stick was tossed towards this duck it actually swam towards the party to examine the stick. They are beautiful birds, of a soft grey-blue colour, and have a high pitched whistling cry which can be quite disconcerting when one stumbles across one at night in the inky blackness of a mountain gorge. One of the most interesting things to watch about these

ducks is the way they can proceed up a roaring, boulder-strewn creek bed, with apparently very little effort. They take advantage of every little eddy and cross current, and seem eel-like in their movements upstream—more like a fish than a bird.

In the open tussocky country we saw banded dotterel, which were nesting, also the harrier hawk—the "kahu" of the Maoris. This bird I am sure is useful to the farmers, although he is ruthlessly trapped and killed throughout New Zealand. Much of the damage done to lambs and cast sheep can rightly be blamed on the black-backed gull. The harrier hawk, on the other hand, destroys many young rabbits and also field mice, the latter causing considerable loss to the farmer through the destruction of grass seed. A harrier's nest was found right out in the tussocks—it contained four eggs.

When pitching our camp we were visited by a New Zealand robin—the only one we saw on the trip. Each morning it would sing in the tree above the tent for quite half an hour and again in the evening. This bird did not seem interested in our doings—after the first inspection—in fact, our presence from then on was completely ignored.

One of the most attractive of our New Zealand birds—the grey warbler—was noticed all through the trip. This bird ranges from the sea coast up to the last clump of subalpine bush. As usual, it was the last bush bird noticed in climbing up the ranges, and its delightful little song was the first to be heard when coming down off the high tops.

One small flock of waxeyes (or white-eyes) was seen; these must share with the grey warbler the distinction of being the most widely distributed of our native birds.

Bellbirds were seen, and the similarity of some of their notes to that of the tui was particularly apparent. Sixteen years ago the writer was privileged to hear a magnificent morning chorus by bellbirds at the Golden Hills hut, but on this occasion the bellbird was not present in nearly so great numbers.

An occasional pair of tuis was seen, and it was noted that one particular tui sang until 8.25 p.m., when dusk had fallen, and the beautiful liquid notes of the tui were rendered along with an obligato provided by a morepork from a neighbouring tree.

On one occasion a tui was seen pursuing a long-tailed cuckoo.

The shining cuckoo was heard—with its lilting song echoing and re-echoing through the bush glades—calling that summer had indeed come. The long-tailed cuckoo was seen on several occasions and heard at times throughout the day and most of the night. It has a slurring note closely resembling one of the chaffinch's notes and has the same ventriloquial gifts as the shining cuckoo. It was always most puzzling to locate the bird and quite a time was spent in trying to find where the call was coming from. One was seen flying overhead and calling out at the same time. Through the binoculars the bird was seen to open its bill wide every time it called—even when in flight. The long-tailed cuckoo is a large, handsome, rakish-looking bird, shunned and disliked by all other bush birds, but it is always a thrill to hear or to see one of them.

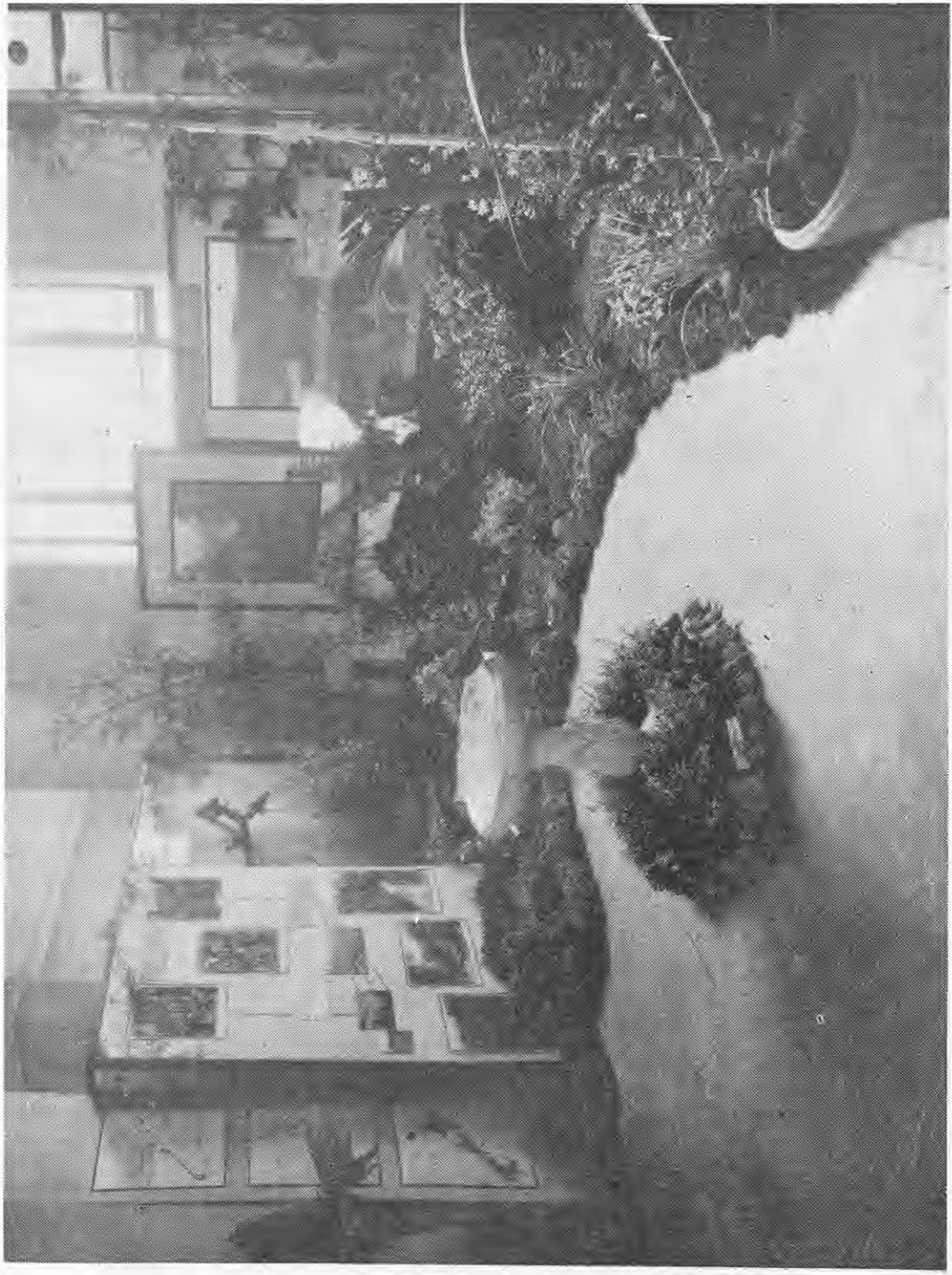
An occasional kaka was seen, but these were rare. Each evening one solitary bird could be seen and heard flying up and across the head of the valley. Everyone knows when the kaka is on the move as this bird keeps calling out as he flies.

Parrakeets were not uncommon, and were usually noticed high up in the tree tops or flying in a small flock over the valley. It seems strange to think that away up in the untouched country one of our native birds looked so much out of place and almost bizarre. The reaction of the average New Zealander would be, "I wonder what cage these birds got out of?"

Whiteheads were present in fair numbers in the bush. They are cheerful, noisy birds—the ones we saw all kept fairly high up in the trees. Only one fantail was seen, and only an occasional tomtit. No wekas were seen and no kiwis heard. A few pair of grey ducks were seen on the river, also a black shag.

Introduced birds in the bush country consisted of the blackbird and the chaffinch, which seem to be the first and farthest out of any of the imported birds in any outback part of New Zealand. One song thrush was seen.

We had ten happy days in ideal surroundings in country that apart from the deer damage must have looked much the same one thousand years ago, and I hope will look much the same a thousand years from now—our own Native Land as God made it. WE SHOULD BE MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER TO PROTECT ITS UNIQUE FORESTS AND BIRDS FROM EXPLOITATION, VANDALISM AND DESTRUCTION. IF WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO FIGHT FOR THEIR PROTECTION WE ARE SURELY NOT FIT TO INHERIT AND HOLD THEM.



AUCKLAND SECTION'S EXHIBIT AT CHEESEMAN MEMORIAL SHOW.
Photo: Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd.

Memorial Show at Auckland Museum

AUCKLAND SECTION'S EXHIBIT

THE accompanying photographs show the exhibit prepared for the Auckland Section by Mr. Robin A. Watson, of the Section's Committee, at the above Show. It set out to contrast the original glories of the New Zealand bush upon the arrival of white settlers with their depletion in subsequent years in the brief span of about a century. It was intended as a challenge to all New Zealanders to learn from past mistakes how to plan and act now not merely to save the remnants of our bush but to expand them.

The story, reading from left to right, leads from the bush-covered condition of New Zealand in 1840 to the deterioration and erosion of the present day, but lest this should serve merely to give a sensation of despondency and frustration a panel, which aroused much interest, was devoted to pictures of beautiful views and some bird sanctuaries in and around Auckland which could be imitated, how to achieve this being suggested by a small model landscape garden which occupied the floor of the first bay.

Use was made of "composition lines" or ribbons leading the eye of the spectator from exhibit to exhibit as the plan unfolded.

The display, which took days of patient work and planning on Mr. Watson's part, was an unqualified success, and has since been shown in the window of an Auckland shop and at the Otahuhu Centennial Show.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The first picture shows the left hand bay, the model garden being laid out with golden kowhai, scarlet clianthus and brilliant horopito in the background. On the next terrace crimson and pink manuka, golden trusses of kumarahou, bronze leaved rangiora, etc. The lawn was planted with New Zealand daphne, violet veronica, variegated coprosma and similar low growing and showy shrubs, the rock borders with creeping fuchsia and the central bed with white, pink and mauve hebes. A nectar trough with tuis on it (partly hidden by notice) had native clematis and cream-flowered bush lawyer climbing up the supports, and in the kowhai tree was a nest with a sitting bird.

In the adjoining bay, shown in the second photograph, the focal point was a tiny warbler on a scale outweighing a bag of gold, typifying the valuable work of birds. Here, and in the exhibits to right and left of the camera the activities of the various groups of native birds were set forth, nectar-eating pollinators, insect eaters, fruit-eating seed distributors, rodent eaters and scavengers.

MR. B. C. ASTON, C.B.E.

IN the New Year Honours List appeared the award of the rank of C.B.E. (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) to our immediate past-President, Mr. Bernard Cracroft Aston. Mr. Aston joined the Society in 1930 and has been a member of the Executive since 1932. He succeeded the late Captain Sanderson as President, a post which he relinquished last year.

In his capacity as Chief Chemist of the Agricultural Department he undertook exhaustive researches into the utilisation of land and the cure and treatment of diseases in stock, with outstanding success.

He carried out much botanical exploration, including between 1907 and 1909 two visits to the islands of the far south. He climbed the 9000ft. Mt. Tupuaenuku in the Kaikouras, and also was one of the first to cross the Mt. Hector range.

Mr. Aston is a botanist of repute, and has discovered over 20 new species of flowering and other plants, many of which bear his name, notable among them being Muehlenbeckia Astoni, Coprosma Astoni, Poa Astoni (of the Snares Islands) and many others.

He is a past-President of the Royal Society of New Zealand, to whose Transactions as well as the Journal of Agriculture he contributed many papers on chemical and botanical subjects. The Dominion Museum is indebted to him for the gift of a plant collection which he made.

The honour bestowed on Mr. Aston is well-deserved and the Society tenders him its heartiest congratulations.

AUCKLAND SECTION'S EXHIBIT AT CHEESEMAN MEMORIAL SHOW—RIGHT HAND BAY.

Photo: Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd.

Tragedy of the Forests

Tree-Love: Maori and Pakeha Versions

By "AOTEAROA"

A LITTLE over half a century ago the forested north-east shoulder of the North Island of New Zealand was unroaded. From Waikaremoana to the East Cape the Huiarau range stood remote in its forested grandeur; the Urewera was a primitive, almost primeval, tract; the sacred mountain, Maungapohatu, was unvisited by whites, feared by Maoris. From the Huiarau highlands rivers—then all surrounded with waterflow-regulatiing bush—ran down to the Bay of Plenty on one side, and to Poverty Bay and the East Coast bays on the other. Between Gisborne and Opotiki, via the coast, many (perhaps most) of the rivers were unbridged. Early in the century the writer had to hire a Maori guide, with two Maori ponies, in order to ride from Te Whaiti (on the Whirinaki tributary of the Rangitaiki) to Waikaremoana by Maori tracks. The travelling time taken over this portion of the Huiarau was two days, with a night camp on top of the range. Maori life then was almost unspoiled. Pigeons, kakas and tuis were abundant.

ELSDON BEST'S UREWERA

From the Whirinaki watershed the track passed to the upper Whakatane and then on to the streams running to Lake Waikare, where the Government accommodation house had not long been built. Elsdon Best had just published his excellent story-guides to Waikaremoana. The tourist traffic would follow the promised road, and hydro-electric power would come in its turn, even then envisaged by engineers.

A few years later, but well within the first decade of this century, the same trip was made on foot; but reversely, that is to say, from Waikaremoana to Te Whaiti, Murupara (then generally known as Galatea), Waiotapu and Rotorua. From Murupara to Waiotapu the unmetalled pumice road passed across the Kaingaroa Plains, then almost treeless, but today carrying one of the most closely packed exotic (man-planted) forests in the world.

Over the Maori tracks between the open Rangitaiki-Whirinaki country and the Waikaremoana-East Coast open country, a guerilla warfare was carried on in the 'sixties and 'seventies between Te Kooti's Maoris on the one side, and on the other side white forces aided by the Arawa native allies under Captain Gilbert Mair, whose memorial is in the Ohinemutu churchyard (see "Camp-fire at Te Tapiri," in the late James Cowan's "Tales of the Maori Bush").

SOME OF THE BIRDS

No bird attracted more attention in the Urewera in those days than the North Island kaka. A detailed description of the colours and shades of colour of any bird as wonderful as the kaka belong to a text-book, not to a story of bird-beauty. Kaka colours are indescribable, but the greatest moment of all was when the bird took flight, and the colours suddenly revealed by the upraised wing flashed through the green forest trees. That was a great moment, quite distinct from what one felt as he watched the bird step parrot-like along a branch digging into the wood with its incisive bill. For a while kakas were snared or otherwise killed in the Urewera forest by the thousand, by Maoris, including Rua's Maoris. Their one-time plenitude made the arts of Maori fowling profitable.

From crown to tail the native pigeon represented a great length of bird—the tail far below a branch, and the head far above, and in between the wonderful white shirt-front of kereru. Yet if the bird sat quiet you could stare into the tree and not see it. Seven in a tree was nothing unusual.

The kaka and the pigeon and the well-known tui (has his song deteriorated in modern times?) all let you observe them, and in those days were certain to attend your walks; but, then and now, to clearly observe the long-tailed cuckoo, koekoea, was a most difficult thing. This fair-sized visitor's call was sometimes heard. The writer has yet to hear anyone describe that call faithfully, and he will not attempt to represent it in words, believing that to be impossible. But it is one of the most elusive, mystical calls of the bush, for the bird seems to be a ventriloquist, and the call apparently comes from anywhere and everywhere. Only once was the long-tailed cuckoo clearly seen. The other cuckoo, pipiwarauroa,

on bush outskirts, would sit for his photograph if you were quiet—a wonderful vision of barred under-surface topped with a bronze-green.

ENTER THE SMALL RIFLE

With the twentieth century visitors to the Urewera came the .22 calibre rifle, ruthless enemy of wild life. On his second trip over the divide the writer saw a young Maori fire at a pigeon in the breeding season. The bird flew off (as often happens when struck by a .22 calibre bullet) and may have crashed and died far beyond reach. When this incident was mentioned to Elsdon Best, he deplored the indiscipline that was spreading among the Maoris, and said that in older (an even in recent) times bird-taking by the Maoris was regulated, and reinforced by the tapu. One reads in Volume I of his book "The Maori": "Tapu pertained to the forests, and, prior to the opening of the bird-snaring season, such tapu was lifted by an adept." Tapu belonged to the nineteenth century; the twentieth century replaced it with gunpowder, and small arms, and the motor car.

ANIMATISM*

Heathendom must be given its due; and one must admit that the decay of tapu and of animatism, with all their paganism, is entitled to a few tears. For instance, a Christian can feel a real companionship in trees—though our deforestation record in New Zealand seems to deny the fact—but can a Christian give trees personality and regard the needless spilling of their sap as approaching the spilling of blood? Let us glance at Elsdon Best's account of how "the old-time Maori," being imbued with the doctrine of the *anima mundi,* looked upon the trees of the forest, even when he entered the forest with timber-hunger. Having been begotten, equally with the trees, from the god Tane, "when the Maori entered the forest he felt that he was among his own kindred, for had not trees and man a common origin, both being the offspring of Tane? Hence the Maori in the forest was among his own folk, as it were; and that forest possessed a tapu life principle even as man does. Thus, when the Maori wished to fell a tree from which to fashion a canoe or house timbers, for two reasons he was compelled to perform a placatory rite ere he could slay one of the offspring of Tane. In the majestic trees he saw living creatures of an elder branch of the great family; he felt the strange, old-world influences that spring from a belief in animatism; he heard the voices of unseen beings in the rustling of branches, in whispering winds, in the sound of rushing waters." The nature-lover today also hears these voices, but without the aid of animatism, which Best regarded as "The attribution of life and personality to things," but not the attribution to things of "a separate or apparitional soul."

* Elsdon Best's word animatism is used in the above outline of his observations in "The Maori." Fowler in "The Concise Oxford Dictionary" spells the word animism.

"WHERE ANGELS FEAR, FOOLS . . ."

Animatism clearly is not compatible with commercial timber-cutting. Even a surviving ember of animatism in a man would cause him to marvel at the impudence with which he fells a kauri tree a thousand years old, or even the rimus aged 400-600 years, which are still being cut down to approaching extinction. It is to be hoped that we moderns are all good Christians. We are certainly not animatists, not even bad animatists.

BIRD-TREE CO-OPERATION

Tane is father of birds as well as trees. Parauri is the wife by whom Tane begot the bellbird, the native crow, and the tui. These birds nearly died in infancy because the right food could not be found for them. They were related to miro and maire through the common paternity of Tane, and these trees' berries turned out to be the food which the birds needed. Thus the birds of the forest, says the legend, "acquired a permanent food supply." In gratitude, the birds disseminated the tree-seeds and helped the seed-carrying winds to extend the forested area.

It is said that the Maori found New Zealand, up to the natural bushline, one great forest. Volcanic eruptions covered millions of acres with pumiceous matter, under which the charred totara trunks are still found. But what volcanoes destroyed is nothing to what the white man has destroyed. The happy partnership of bird of forest has been brought close to its end. Their cousinship in the Tane genealogy cannot survive steel and fire and introduced enemies. They have fallen before an age which knows not animatism. Before an age in which culture is preached but not practised.

HAKUTURI REFORESTATION

Thus in the olden days the trees were protected by a living personality, but not a

separate apparitional soul. Trees were also protected by forest elves called the Hakuturi. "The Hakuturi folk re-erected the tree felled by Rata because he had not placated the forest deities ere felling it." In the last hundred years hundreds of thousands of trees have been felled quite without ritual, and the Hakuturi are at least a century behind their job.

Man and the tree belong so close to each other, it is natural (though not practical) to correlate the berries of the tree with inhabitants of the human head. Thus: "Rehua seems to have represented forests or trees. Birds are said to have eaten the parasites of the head of Rehua; such parasites, we are told, were the berries of trees." Laments Elsdon Best: In these days "the forest of Tane has largely disappeared, torn from the breast of Papa the Earth Mother by an intrusive and utilitarian people."

Maori tribalism was a check upon trespass on a tribe's forests by unauthorised persons of another tribe. "Many such trespassers have been slain." The tameness of native birds when the white man came to New Zealand seems to throw light on the Maoris' care for bird survival, and on the silent nature of their bird-taking (snares, spears, etc.) in the absence of gunpowder. "Old fowlers have told me (Best) that, when attending snares at a creek, they have occasionally had pigeons settle on their shoulders. The pigeon was one of the least shy in the days when the shotgun was little used, or not at all." By covering creeks with thick branches, but leaving access points set with snares, the Maori snared thirsty birds. Sometimes water was put in wooden troughs erected in the trees, and there the birds, thirsty with berry-eating, again met the Maori fowler's snares. The spear could also be used from platforms in trees. A wooden spear might be 30 feet long.

EVEN WHALES KNOW EROSION

It is a far cry from the Urewera of the nineteeth century to the man-made erosion of today. Man-made erosion is seen at its best (or worst) on the Waioeka Gorge road between Opotiki and Gisborne. Futile attempts to make farms in this gorge serve to underline the evils of deforestation and the madness of trying to grass steep slopes. The autumn of 1948 brought record floods to the lowlands on both sides of Hurarua range, to Gisborne on Poverty Bay, also to Opotiki and other Bay of Plenty townships.

The hinterland of Poverty Bay and other bays has special mass movements of earth peculiar to the district. These were probably in slow motion before the white man, but he has been an accelerating agent. Cumberland ("Soil Erosion in New Zealand") states, with fair reservations, the case concerning man-made erosion. And it is a convincing case. "Natural movement," writes Cumberland, "was not sufficiently rapid and disruptive widely to disturb the indigenous bush cover." With fire and steel man more effectively disturbed it. After him, the deluge.

Of course, the north-east shoulder of the North Island has no monopoly either of deforestation or erosion. The daily Press even announces that the Tory Channel whalers in August—not for the first time—were hindered in their search for whales through "flooded rivers again discolouring the waters of Cook Strait." It may be remembered that a generation ago Cook Strait navigation was rendered temporarily impossible by smoke from the great Raetihi bush fires. The smoke disappeared soon, but erosion in the denuded headwaters of the Wanganui and other streams in the fire area goes steadily on. Cook Strait feels it still; and if, as the daily Press suggests, the whales have benefited, they surely are the only beneficiaries.

Along the Track

WANGANUI.—Today I have in my garden an exact replica of that lovely little story about fantails in the last number (August, 1948, issue, Number 89), "Fantail Family at Breakfast."

MARLBOROUGH.—A few trees near my home used to harbour a number of small birds, and among them the hedgesparrow was frequently seen searching for food along a hedge and among the branches of fruit trees. During the last twelve months, the birds have become less noticeable and are now rarely seen. In the spring, a plum tree was a mass of bloom admired by many visitors and a good crop of fruit was predicted, but it is a failure. The fruit is not yet ripe but an odd green plum can be seen. A close inspection has revealed that the branches of the tree are loaded with vermin of the aphis type, and the leaves are disappearing. Such a state has not occurred previously and is thought to be due to the arrival of German owls, which have either killed the blight-eating birds or driven them off. There are several owls in the neighbourhood, and night after night their screeching disturbs all and sundry.

MARLBOROUGH.—On visiting a friend, I found there was small need of fly-papers or D.D.T. in the house. A pied fantail was a regular visitor to the kitchen—often flying through the window and performing good work in reducing the fly population. One morning was very cold, and the moment the window was opened the fantail flew straight in to alight on the handle of the kettle, where it basked in the warmth of the stove before it began its work among the flies.

HAUTURU.—About a dozen pukekos were seen flying over the top of the Hauturu range, which is from 1500 to 1700 feet high. They, we imagine, had come from somewhere in the northern King Country and were making for or in the direction of Kawhia Harbour. When seen they were about 800 feet above the bed of the Awaroa River, which runs into Kawhia Harbour. Are there records of pukekos making long flights?

(Yes, most rails have two types of flight—the usual short, apparently difficult flight they do when disturbed, which gives one the impression their flight is weak, and the occasional strong flight which our Kawhia correspondent has observed, when they appear to take a new lease of life and fly far and, if necessary, high.—Ed.)

NAPIER.—Last October I found two birds lying prone and quite exhausted on the floor of the porch. To my astonishment I found that they were shining cuckoos. They remained there for about an hour slowly recovering and then flew away. It seemed such a strange place for them to take shelter. Do you think these birds were exhausted as a result of their migration or what other reason would have caused them to act like this? We had heard the call of the cuckoo in the garden a fortnight or so before this happened. (Probably in the stormy and cloudy weather prevalent at the time they had come in from the north-west and been blown across to Napier before realising they were over land—they would of course, be exhausted—or possibly blown east above New Zealand and then returned.—Ed.)

MARTON.—Although we live only five minutes' walk from the Post Office we have the joy of regular visits from tuis, waxeyes, bellbirds, warblers, fantails, goldfinches, chaffinches, yellow hammers, starlings, linnets, while lots of thrushes, blackbirds and sparrows are always with us. Of the native birds, I've only seen fantails and the warblers actually building in our native trees. A few years ago the warblers built their nest in an akerautangi as early as August 4. Our bird bath is very much appreciated by nearly all of the birds. At times it is full of waxeyes splashing away gaily. Only after I had water laid on to the bird bath did the tuis visit it; the other birds were content with the bath being filled up with a can. What with kowhais, banksias, proteas, cydonias, gums, lucernes and many native trees, and food we give the birds, they are fairly well cared for.

DUNEDIN.—I was very interested in the account of the feeding of baby fantails in a recent number of "Forest and Bird." I watched a parent bird feeding four youngsters. They sat in a row on a branch and they were fed in rotation, 1, 2, 3 and 4. This order was strictly adhered to by the parent. However, No. 4 apparently decided he was really very hungry so, following the feeding of No. 2 and during the absence of the adult bird, No. 4 changed places with No. 3. The parent returned, completely ignored the imposter and fed the correct bird, No. 3, at the end of the row. No. 4 was fed next.

Destruction of Keas

Removal of Subsidy in the County of Westland

THIS Society has been successful in having the subsidy, or bounty, on the killing of Keas removed as far as the County of Westland is concerned.

The Society does not claim that the contention that keas kill sheep is incorrect; there appears to be no doubt that they do, though probably there are only one or two killers in each locality, which get away, leaving their innocent companions, who naturally settle on a juicy morsel, to bear the brunt. We must admit, reluctantly, that for the protection of farmers' flocks it is necessary that they be kept down in certain areas; reluctantly, of course, because a native bird has to be slaughtered, not because the farmers' flocks have to be protected.

But on enquiries being made from the Agricultural Department about 18 months ago, we were surprised to find that the County of Westland headed the list of counties in which subsidies had been paid by the Government for kea beaks during the year 1946-47, with £368, or, at 5/- a beak, 1,472 Keas, over 43% of all the subsidies paid throughout the South Island (there are no keas in the North Island). Not only that, but Westland provided over two and a half times as many subsidies as the next highest County on the list, Vincent, with £140.

Now a glance at the map will show that the southern part of Westland is practically all alpine country, where no sheep could run, though north of Ross the mountains recede somewhat and leave more open country.

Enquiries by the Society from the Westland County Council elicited the fact, as we had suspected, that the greatest number of beaks received were posted from the alpine districts to the south, where, of course, there are no sheep, or so few as to be negligible. The County Council informed us that parcels of up to 60 beaks at one time had been received from deer stalking parties: in other words, the subsidy paid on these was just "blood money" paid for an unfortunate bird, which was doing no harm.

In view of this, a deputation from this Society waited on the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. W. E. Parry, in February, 1948, and asked that the subsidy be removed in the County of Westland from Ross southwards. The Minister gave the deputation a sympathetic hearing, and protracted inter-Departmental negotiations were set on foot, the Westland County Council endorsing the Society's proposal.

In the meanwhile the official deer cullers of the Wildlife Division of the Internal Affairs Department were directed not to molest keas in the district, an instruction which we are sure they will agree was entirely reasonable.

The upshot was that the Minister for Agriculture, Hon. E. L. Cullen, who is the ultimate authority in this instance, approved of the recommendation that the 5/- subsidy on kea beaks should be discontinued in respect of keas destroyed after 30th November, 1948, not only from Ross southwards but in the whole County of Westland, which was actually more than the Society asked for. This showed that in the opinion of the authorities affected our request was a reasonable one, and the Society wishes to thank the Minister concerned, the Heads and Staffs of their Departments, also the Field Officers and others who investigated and reported, thus freeing from persecution a bird which in his own habitat is definitely useful in that among other things, as Dr. Falla observes, he carries the seeds of rockbinding plants up the screes and other loose surfaces, and in this particular habitat was doing no harm to anyone.

SANDERSON SANCTUARY FUND

Previously acknowledged ..	£145	8	7
P.O.S.B. Interest, Jan. to March, 1948		15	3
	£146	3	10

A Five-Hundred-Mile Tour

By E. T. FROST

A TOUR of the North Auckland peninsula between Kaitaia and the Waitemata Harbour proved of great interest.

The first thing that the nature lover notices is that this is a "Kowhai year," and as one travels around harbour foreshores and on roads running parallel with the many streams a blaze of yellow meets the eye almost at every turn. Especially so was this noticeable south of Whangarei between Mangapai and Waipu, where for miles the golden heads of this beautiful tree were interspersed with the white titree *(Leptospermum ericoides),* kohukohu and karaka. The glory of this tree culminated in Kowhai Park at Warkworth, where, in the shelter of the valley they were seen at their best. Associated with this abundance of nectar-producing flowers were to be seen the tuis, and I noticed them from isolated trees on the Hokianga Harbour right down to Albany, a distance of nearly 200 miles. There is no doubt that this beautiful bird is more than holding its own, and such a year of profuse flowering of the Kowhai attracts them from far and near.

The Waitangi Trust Board planted out a grove of about four hundred Kowhai trees, many of which flowered this year and were soon found by the tuis, which, by the way, are nesting close by, and it is to be hoped that they will increase and become a feature of that beautiful reserve. Here and there isolated heads of the red rata were to be seen in all their beauty.

A most interesting place at which I called in and spent several days was Helena Bay, on the Whangarei-Russell Road. Here is a real naturalist's paradise. The headmaster of the school has evidently got the pupils very much interested in all kinds of native study. In an enclosed space, with plenty of bush mould and leaves, I saw specimens of native snails collected in the vicinity of the school. They were the "Kauri Snail" *(Parypantha busbyii)* the *Parapantha rhytida,* and the Pupuharakeke or Flax Snail *(Pacystylus hongii).*

The fine beach, about two hundred yards from the school, yields many specimens of shell life, which the pupils also collect.

Attached to the school is an area which is planted in many and varied specimens of native trees, and which in a few years will be of great interest to later pupils and a thing of beauty for the district.

Many other schools could take a lesson from this little school on the shores of Helena Bay. From Helena Bay to Russell the road winds over bush-clad hills and through fertile valleys but evidences of summer fires are on all sides, especially as one nears Russell, and the gorse is creeping out from that historic centre, and as it is a great fire carrier it is assisting in the destruction of many isolated patches of native bush.

I saw several such areas in which almost all the trees were dead or dying. The same thing is occurring between Paihia and Kawa Kawa, where there has been much fire damage during the past few years.

From such a depressing scene of gorse and dead timber it was pleasing to arrive at the beautiful farming district of Ngapuhi, four miles south of Kaikohe. Once covered with a dense forest, it is now a first-class farming area, and it was pleasing to notice the areas of native bush that the farmers have set by as reserves. Here again, the tui is very much in evidence and his bell-like notes can be heard from almost every grove.

A feature of this district is the persistence of the totara. After the bush was felled, about 40 years ago, many young totaras came up with the grass, and one can notice today, especially around a large totara stump, the way in which this beautiful tree persisted in spite of the grazing. Today there are small groves of pure totara besides many isolated trees dotted here and there over the paddocks, which now provide shade and shelter for the numerous sheep and cattle. Totara seems to thrive on hoof treading and rubbing by stock, which is something that few of our native trees can stand. Neither do they seem to require shelter during their early growth.

The final lap of my trip was made by areoplane, yet at the height of 2000 feet one could not escape the glory of the bush in spring time. Looking down as we were crossing the Mangamuka ranges, the dense bush appeared as a carpet ranging in colour from the yellowish green of the kohekohe to the dark green of the taraire. Splashes of white indicated clusters of clematis which had cleared the treetops.

The School Group Scheme

THE Society has always welcomed Junior Members; in fact, we have a considerable number of them, and we have found that many schools have given us their support, finding it most useful in the nature education part of their curriculum.

We cannot resist quoting verbatim a letter received from one teacher:—

> "Please find enclosed ——— being the subscription for (the school) and ——— to cover next year's subscription. I myself am leaving at the end of the year and thought it is a good idea to collect the 1949 subscriptions before I leave. The connection with Forest and Bird has been a source of great interest and pleasure for several years, and the pupils have become bird lovers for life."

We found, however, that our school membership tended to become not uniform, some schools joining as members, endowment, ordinary, or in some cases taking junior membership for the whole school, others joining up numbers of pupils and giving the school address for all of them, others doing the same and giving the private addresses, and still others joining up a number as a School Group and having the Journals sent in bulk to the school for distribution. After a period of trial and error, we decided that the latter system was the most satisfactory, and have accordingly, since the issue of our last Journal, launched our School Group Scheme, under which a number of pupils within a school may join as a Forest and Bird School Group receiving a special membership concession, 2/- instead of 2/6 annually, and also concessions for teachers joining in, and who will have their Journals sent them in bulk for distribution to members.

Before circularising the Primary Schools and District High Schools, which come under the control of Education Boards, we asked permission from the Boards, and received it—one or two of them expressing their enthusiasm—from all except Wellington and Hawke's Bay.

The Society feels that the formation of School Groups will, through the quarterly receipt of "Forest and Bird" by the pupils, definitely assist the teachers in the Natural History instruction, and thereby at the same time carries out one of its main objects: "To take all reasonable steps to educate the public, including school children, regarding the urgency and importance of the preservation of native forest and bird life."

Forest-Inhabiting Bird Album

Loose Leaf Sets for Use in Schools

THE Society took advantage of the reprinting of the Album, to try and fill in a want which it feels has long existed in schools, pictures of N.Z. Birds in a form readily usable for educational purposes.

It accordingly made arrangements for a number of the sheets, excluding the Preface and Foreword, to be run off the machines and supplied loose, together with a manila satchel or folder on the outside and inside of which were reproduced the Title Page and Index respectively. The Executive decided to confine these loose sheets strictly to sale for educational purposes, and consequently a circular was issued to schools offering them for 7/6 each, and the response from both schools and individual teachers was immediate, and the greater part have been sold. Five Education Boards—Taranaki, Canterbury, Nelson, Otago and Southland—in fact, bought them in bulk, sufficient to issue one each to all their schools.

There are some left, and we should be very glad to supply them to any schools or teachers who have not yet ordered, and to any institution such as Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigades, *provided that they are to be used for educational purposes only.* The price is 7/6 nett, post free.

Quarterly Newsletter

Bird Island Sanctuary, Dunedin.—Following a complaint to the Society some time ago from a resident of St. Kilda that vandals made a practice of molesting birds on this island, representations were made by the Society to the Internal Affairs Department, and we are now glad to report that the Department has informed us that the St. Clair Surf Life Saving Association has erected a notice board giving warning against this practice, and that the Association has been most helpful in the matter. Our thanks go to the St. Clair Surf Life Saving Association, and we hope that with the vigilance of their members and also of the Rangers appointed for the district as reported in our May, 1948, Newsletter, the birds will now be left in peace.

Albatross Chicks on the Otago Peninsular.—And, probably as the first fruits of these Rangers' work, three Albatross chicks have been reared this year in the sanctuary at Taiaroa Head. The Internal Affairs Department have erected a protective fence round the area, and under a special by-law of the Otago Harbour Board, a fine of £20 may be imposed on anyone in the area.

Auckland Section.—In October, too late to be reported in the November Newsletter, this Section had a most successful field day, which about 50 members attended, at a beach 15 miles by rail and 40 miles by bus from Auckland. The number of birds seen is impressive—New Zealand dotterel, banded dotterel, pied and black oyster-catchers, blue herons, grey and brown duck and shovellers, black-billed gulls, pied stilts, and—the chief thrill—a group of about 2,000 godwits resting after their migration before dispersing to their summer quarters. The leaders were Mr. Sibson and Mr. McKenzie (of Clevedon). The party had lunch on the beach with billy tea, and as our Auckland Section secretary says, "everyone asked when the next one was to be."

President's Visit to Auckland.—During the week 11th to 15th October, the President of the Society, Mr. A. P. Harper, was in Auckland and was able to meet the committee of the Section, having most satisfactory discussions with them on many matters of interest to the Section and the Society generally. He also met the committee of the Waipoua Preservation Society, and discussed with them the forthcoming hearing of the Society's new Petition before the Lands Committee of the House.

Christchurch Section had their last meeting of the season on 20th October, with about 40 members present. Mr. McCaskill gave a talk on the "Problems of Land Use in New Zealand," stressing the necessity for loking at sanctuaries as a form of land use, for aesthetic, water-conservation and plant- and bird-protection purposes, as against the normal conception that the only form of land use is agricultural and farming. His talk was illustrated with lantern slides and included references to Waipoua Forest.

We regret to announce the resignation of Miss Stark as Hon. Secretary of the Section because of illness in her family, and extend to her our sympathy. The new Hon. Secretary is Mr. R. V. Cox, 27 Creyke Rd., Christchurch, N.W.3.

Four meetings have been arranged for the 1949 season in the Chamber of Commerce Hall, on 20th April, 15th June, 17th August and 19th October. Christchurch members are earnestly invited to attend these meetings; the names of the guest speakers will be announced by circular before each meeting. An important announcement will be made at the 20th April meeting as regards the finance of the Section.

Gisborne Section had a meeting of members on 4th October, with Mr. Peach in the chair, about 40 being present, an excellent turn-out considering the fact that it was raining heavily and that there were other meetings that evening which took away some of the members. The Secretary of the Society, who was in Gisborne at the time, gave an illustrated talk on "Nature in New Zealand." This was really a talk prepared for schools, but the meeting was good enough to express its appreciation.

Schools.—The talk for schools mentioned in the last item was given by the Secretary to Marsden School, Wellington, and Woodford House, Havelock North.

Further News Items to which we would refer you will be found elsewhere in this issue under the headings of "The Notornis," "Destruction of Keas," "Cheeseman Memorial Show—Auckland Section's Exhibit," "School Group Scheme," "Forest-Inhabiting Album—Looseleaf Sets for Use in Schools."

IDEAL AVIARIES

By FLORA PATIE

THE aviary was large and roomy with a long flight and warm nesting house. The owner carefully tended his beautiful pets, studying the special needs of each bird. Canaries, goldfinches, Indian finches and budgies sang, called and chattered happily. But there was something lacking: the birds flew about the aviary or hopped from twig to twig of branches arranged in the flight. Dry, bare branches these were from which the bark had long since been stripped. The birds could see trees, shrubs and flowers in the garden but nothing green grew within their reach;

No leafy glade through which to fly
On swift wing, gloriously free.

Freedom—that is what is lacking, we thought. How much more enjoyable to see the birds coming and going as they do in our garden.

We heard the joyous notes of tuis and bellbirds on our return home and found blackbirds and hedge sparrows busy in the garden hunting grubs and insects. Silvereyes, with quivering wing, were merrily playing around the sweet water pots in the kanuka tree, and our pet bellbird called to us loudly to kindly fill the pots which the tiny, greedy birds had emptied. This is one of the two baby bellbirds that we first saw last summer, being fed by their mother from our bird-table. One day she told them it was time they were feeding themselves; we could see her pushing one over until he was hanging almost upside down. We watched, and soon he was tasting for himself. These two little ones were quite fearless; often they allowed us to fill the pots while they waited close by, near enough for us to see the colour of their eyes. It was some time before they lost the light streak at the sides of their baby mouths. Sometimes when they found the pots empty one of them would come to the tree opposite our door and sing; should the door be open, the lovely notes echoed through the house.

Throughout the winter a handsome tui and his pretty mate came for breakfast every morning. They also became quite fearless. While other birds were silent, bellbirds have tolled in the early morning and during the day and have charmed us with their sweet songs in garden and bush. The tui has a deeper note, preceded by a musical chuckle, which, judging by the movements of his throat, is a great effort.

In this way he made us aware of his presence in the morning if he had to wait for the pots to be filled. It was amusing to watch him from the window.

In June the bellbirds were eagerly inspecting the tiny green flower buds on the native fuchsia trees, and in July they found the first flowers opening. As we were strolling down the bush track one day in July, we noticed that the orihou was in bloom and saw a tui and some bellbirds happily feasting there.

In August the fuchsia trees in our garden and on the edge of the bush were laden with flowers. Evidently, other trees also were in bloom or whatever food the birds require was in good supply, as the birds came less frequently to be fed, and by September had stopped coming altogether. We heard them in the bush-clad valley near which we live but seldom saw them. Probably they were mating and preparing for nesting further afield.

Silvereyes still came to the sweet pots. They, too, were mating and we have seen from our window the pretty sight of two tiny birds sitting closely together on a branch of the kanuka tree. On this same tree we often see the little grey warbler, fluttering and spreading its fan-shaped tail, while searching for insect grubs. Friendly fantails, with gay twittering, turn somersaults in the air as they catch flies and insects.

Many bird lovers take the trouble to feed the birds when they are hungry, and so help to keep rare birds alive during the cold winter months. Their gardens are natural aviaries where they may have the pleasure of cultivating the acquaintance of birds that are no less attractive because they are free. These ideal aviaries cost little and provide surprising and unexpected pleasures.

Tales of Native Birds

A Trick that Failed

Over 50 years ago I was mapping the unexplored country in South Westland. In those days many birds that are now seldom seen were plentiful. Whenever we set up a camp that wekas would come round and look for something to steal and by some process, which we never could discover, one or a pair of wekas would establish control of the camp.

This bird, or pair of birds, would never allow a rat or any other bird to come near us if it could be stopped, because it would interfere with their source of food from our scraps. I have seen the weka in possession rush wildly at a thrush, crow, a robin or rat if one of them came too near our shelter.

One day a thrush was sitting on a branch of a shrub about 4 feet from the ground. Our camp weka saw him and rushed under the branch to frighten him away, but Mr. Thrush knew he was safe four feet off the ground and refused to be frightened; so Mr. Weka sauntered back into the bush. In a few minutes he returned and when he came under the thrush he suddenly tumbled down and, with stiffened limbs and ruffled feathers, seemed to be a very dead bird—but one wicked eye remained open! He evidently hoped that the thrush would hop down and come close enough to be attacked. However, Mr. Thrush looked down at the motionless weka for a few seconds and then began to sing—I don't know what the song meant but I have an idea that it meant "I've played this game before"—leaving our friend the weka to recover from his apparent death and to walk away trying not to look foolish.

The thrush never fell into the trap, yet the weka, which was clever enough in carrying out his plan, was stupid enough to come back two or three times and try it on again — which shows that with all his cleverness he was really very stupid.

The above story is told by our President, Mr. A. P. Harper. Even though the number of native birds has been much reduced, there are still occasions when interesting actions of theirs can be observed. We will send 5/- every quarter for what we judge to be the best story of native birds sent in by a junior member and if we have space we will publish it. But please make it short and if it is the writer's own observation so much the better, BUT IT MUST BE TRUE.

Photo. B. Iorns.

Fierce customers.—Young kahu (harrier hawks). Our correspondent says they fed out of his hand—out of it, not on it!

Photo. B. Iorns.

Pipiwharauroa was not having a bath! This shining cuckoo had hit a roof when chasing a blackbird, and after being nursed back to health was just getting ready to go.

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