

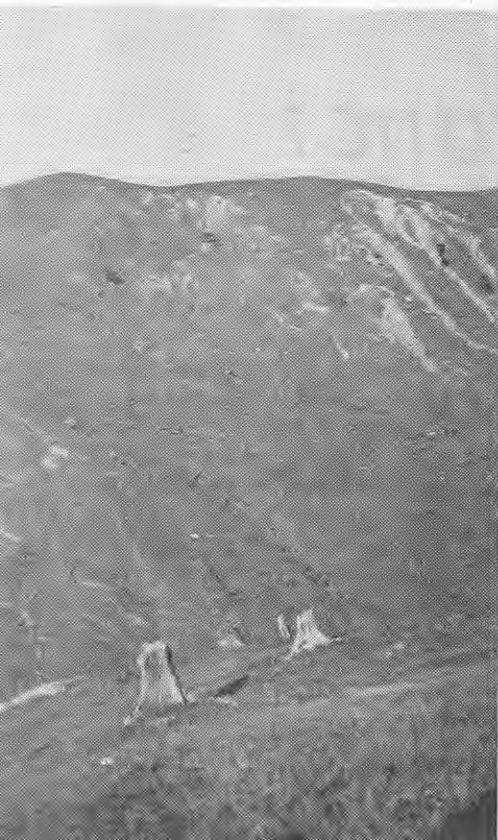
## Takahea or Takahe

MR. JOHANNES C. ANDERSEN states that W. B. D. Mantell, the scientist who first found the fossil skeleton in Taranaki, and later secured the skin and some of the bones of the first living specimen found, in Otago, was in Otago and in close contact with the Maori as Government officer for negotiating the purchase of the greater part of Otago. Moreover, he learnt from the Maori that the name of the bird was moho in the North and takahe (he heard no alternative) in the South. Both names were known in the North—moho and takahe—and both these names (never takahea) appeared in the first science paper about the bird, published by Mantell's father, the English geologist and physician, in London in 1850; the fossil had been discovered in 1848. There is a reason for the final "e" of the name being taken by some ears for a sound approaching "ea", and that is, the "e" had the long sound of "e" in the word "bend"; but no Maori ear and no pakeha ear, conversant with Maori, would take it for "ea." In Williams' Dictionary, both forms, takahe, and tahakea, are given, but takahe

comes first, the other only as an occasional alternative; and the first pakeha to find the bird and learn its name from the Maori of the North and of the South, recorded "takahe" from the first, and only takahe (with moho as the name in the North).

Mr. Anderson also points out that the scientific name of the living bird is *Notornis hochstetteri*, and not *Notornis mantelli*, which is the name given to the fossil bird, the two species showing slight differences. He adds, "I admit that Mantell's name *ought* to go with the living bird, but unfortunately it has been decreed otherwise."

(As stated in an editorial note in our issue of Feb. 1949 the name was given as Takahea on the authority of the late Jas. Cowan, a noted authority on Maori matters. As regards the scientific name, scientific opinion is now swinging towards giving the name *Notornis mantelli* to all species of notornis so far found. Present opinion is that the differences in structure in the species found are so fine as not to warrant subdivision.—Ed.)




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The correspondent who sent us these photographs stated that this country was originally covered with heavy totara, matai and a little rimu. Up to August last year 80 to 90 ewes were run on this face, but now it will barely carry 50. Readers will note the shingle slide which will cover the fertile lands below. Where native bush is milled or destroyed native trees should be planted.

Photo F. Chatfield.

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