

RED-DEER MENACE IN N.Z.

In a broadcast interview on 24 January, Dr. Wodzicki, Director of the Ecological Section of the D.S.I.R., spoke on New Zealand's problem. For nowhere else in the world, he said, were there comparable numbers of introduced animals within an environment of comparable vegetation. During his recent overseas tour, he had observed damage in the deer forests of Europe, but this vegetation could be restored, because it had developed *in the presence* of the browsing animals. In New Zealand this was not the case. Our unique vegetation had evolved without such species, and was thus particularly vulnerable to their inroads. Furthermore, the European trees were deciduous, which meant that the period during which browsing animals could damage their foliage was limited to a definite season, giving time also for recovery in the off season.

But there could be no such respite for New Zealand's indigenous vegetation. Here it was open season for browsing animals all the year round, the ample, never-ceasing food supply in its turn allowing numbers to multiply at a fantastic rate in a sort of vicious circle. And it had to be remembered that there were no predators.

Dr. Wodzicki next spoke of research as a major requirement for coping with our own peculiar deer problem, and he touched on the various types of research that are at present under way in different parts of the world on this topic at the present time, from Scottish ecological studies to the California research department. A Utah professor was engaged on a study of particular interest to New Zealand; for some areas carried both deer and sheep, a condition also existing in New Zealand. A point emphasised by Dr. Wodzicki was that New Zealand had not only *different* but also *many more* problems than other deer-carrying countries, and it was just not possible to make blanket assertions or generalise from findings in other countries. Local research was the answer, and this was in its initial stages in New Zealand. What was needed, summed up Dr. Wodzicki, was "cooperation, cooperation not only of Government departments and foresters, but also of sportsmen, landowners," and all who had the future welfare of the country at heart.

—From *Forestry News*, Feb. 1963.

THE CULTIVATION OF NATIVE PLANTS by Rev. Father C. J. Callaghan, S.M.

This talk was given to the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Hastings-Havelock North Section by Rev. Father C. J. Callaghan, S.M., on 12 July, 1962.

Why grow native plants? Why grow anything? For the pleasure of it. And it is a noble pleasure, exclusively human. The pleasure we take in contemplating beauty is an aesthetic one, and it is the more satisfying if our efforts have contributed to it. Animals do not adorn the surroundings of their lairs; and it is a saddening sight when human beings neglect the grounds, large or small, of their homes. So we have our beds or borders of flowers and shrubs. But it is not just gardening that I wish to tell you about. For one thing, I am not a gardening expert, but my hobby is the study of our native plants. I have found it helps and enriches the pleasure of that hobby to identify the plants, and it helps far more to cultivate them.

God prepared the earth as our home, and He planted it with a great variety of gardens. These are the flora of the different lands. To make our gardens we borrow from His. We domesticate and improve the wild species. The plants in our nurseries and our gardens are drawn from all over the world. I think it is a pity that quite often there is little or nothing from our own flora.

By contrast, my own interest is narrow. I grow only native plants. It is an expression of my love for our own land, its flora in particular. Kipling tells us:

God gave all men all earth to love, but
since our hearts are small,

Ordained one land should prove beloved
over all.

What to Grow

Some of the trees, if there is room. But there is no need to plan as if they were to remain there for ever, or to come to full maturity. The stage of our trees up to early maturity is often the most ornamental. A tree fully justifies itself if it gives pleasure to a generation or two. Besides, some may be topped or pruned to advantage—red beech, for instance; it may then be pruned regularly for decoration purposes. Many native trees, till