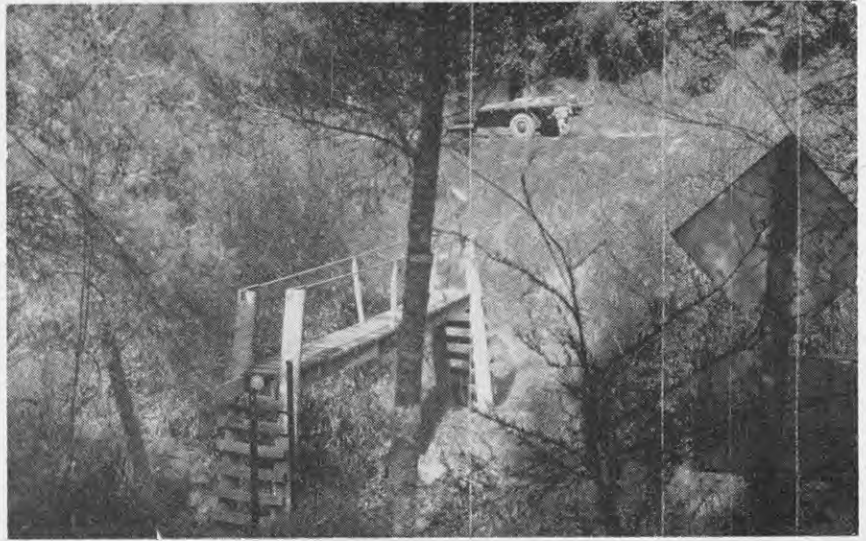


A footbridge over Mangahoe Stream gives access to a 28-acre stand on the Mangahoe road.



### Sleeping Pits

On a high cliff overlooking a gully, where river and stream meet, and sheltered by bush, are three Maori sleeping pits. A titoki with a trunk of 18 in. in diameter grows at the edge of the largest pit, its roots exposed on the inside of the pit.

The late Mr M. J. G. Smart, a former curator of the Wanganui Museum, identified the pits as the temporary sleeping quarters of Maori in the district, who in the past came from their main habitation to replenish their larder. The district, which was covered with bush for miles in the early days, teemed with birds such as kaka and kereru. There was a plentiful supply of berries and fruits of the forest—tawa, hinau, supplejack, and

kohia berries—to be enjoyed by pigeon and man alike.

The river and stream could supply eels, minnows, and other fish. Even in recent years an eel basket or hinaki has been seen in the river. Eels are still trapped by eel weir and basket about the end of March or early April. Formerly this area was a secondary food basket when supplies ran short in winter. The closest kainga would be only a few miles' walk from Kauangaroa on the Whangaehu River, which has no fish because of its sulphur content. The main villages at Turakina would also use these upper regions for food gathering.

The ridge would be chosen because of its good drainage and the sunken floor of the pits would ensure greater warmth in winter

A Rangitikei Section working party setting up picnic tables at the main stand, Sutherland Reserve.

