

In January I moved to Waimarino and was there till the beginning of March, engaged in the demarcation of about six miles of the boundary of the Waimarino military camping-ground. Whilst there I also cut out four pieces of land with beautiful bush protecting Waimarino Station and Township (to be). I am now again on the Wanganui, cutting off parts of the Ngaporo and Whakaihuwaka Blocks, and shall be here till the winter.

In addition to the foregoing works, I have made special inspections and reports on the Ohakune Scenic Reserve, Whaharangi Scenic Reserve, Makuri Scenic Reserve, reserves below Taumarunui, Mangonui-a-te-Ao River, coal find at Ohura River, and the Wakatipu Lake recreation reserves.

There are still large reservations to be made on the Wanganui River between Pipiriki and Taumarunui, and the assistance of another surveyor is highly desirable.

It will be remembered that when Mr. Booker started surveying Te Tuhi No. 5 Reservation the Maoris cut down in it a small piece of bush; had it been left alone tree ferns would soon have sprung up; but they have since burned it off and sown grass. The last time I came up the river I noticed that about 8 acres had been cut down on the reserve I surveyed opposite Pipiriki, in spite of the fact that I had given the man a tracing showing his boundaries. Below Pipiriki there have been attempts to set fire to the bush on land belonging to the Crown.

As regards the inspection of reserves already made, there still remain to be done all those in Southland, Westland, and Nelson, which survey-work, up till now, has prevented me doing.

*Native Birds.*—While camped at Waimarino I was pleased to find that the bell-bird (*korimako*, or, on the Wanganui, *kokomako*) is now very plentiful there. It was absent from there (and from the Wanganui also) for some years, but is now again plentiful. This bird far surpasses in the beauty and variety of its notes any bird I have heard. At daybreak at Pipiriki the chorus sung by bell-birds, tuis, native canaries, sky-larks, blackbirds, and thrushes in praise to the great Author of Life and Day (who can say to the contrary?) is music that should compensate a tired and sleepy tourist for the bed he may have reluctantly left.

At Waimarino also I saw a few robins, and heard occasionally the mournful but sweet note of the *kokako*. The robins were so tame that they would pick for insects under the tripod of the theodolite whilst I was observing; I even had to be careful that I did not tread on them. A bird of so unsuspicious a nature is not likely to last long. I found the canary as far north as Marakopa.

As all shooting and killing of birds on scenic reserves are statutory offences, it must be strongly impressed upon bird-collectors and hunters that they are liable to heavy punishment if they take birds from our reserves.

It may be mentioned that Maoris are in the habit of ornamenting baskets and mats, which they sell to tourists and the public, with the feathers of kiwis, tuis, and kakas. Such a practice leads to the wholesale destruction of such birds, and must be strongly deprecated.

*Botanical.*—On the cliffs of the Wanganui River, near its junction with the gorgy Mangaio, I had the good luck to find a plant that is new to the botanical world, and which is one of the most interesting finds made of recent years in New Zealand. The plant grows only on damp, shady, precipitous cliffs, and belongs to the genus *Senecio*; it is rather a handsome plant, with large bright-green cordate leaves about 1 ft. long, and is quite unlike any other *Senecio*. It is confined to a very small locality, and probably there are not more than a hundred plants in existence. It will be another fact to support de Vries theory of mutants.

At Marakopa Valley, about 400 ft. above the sea, I found the toe (*Cordyline indivisa*) growing, also the most handsome *Panax arboreum* var. *latum*; and there and at Awaroa Inlet, and at Waitomo, the fern *Asplenium trichomanes*; at Kawhia Harbour the native aniseed (*Angelica gingidium*), *Polypodium tenellum* (trailing fern), *Paratrophis Banksii* (a small latex-producing tree), and the most beautiful of all the ratas—*Metrosideros diffusa*—a rather slender trailing or climbing plant with a great mass of the most beautiful crimson flowers. At Te Rau-a-moa I found *Pittosporum huttonianum*. On the Wanganui River, *Dracophyllum strictum*, the fern *Trichomanes elongatum*; the strange carbuncle-like parasitic plant *Dactylanthus Taylori*, at Waimarino; also, there, *Prasophyllum rufum*, a rare but modest orchid. The foregoing are simply new habitats, not new plants.

*Fires.*—Damage by fires still continues. Along the Main Trunk Railway a good deal of the proposed reservation near Owango and Kakahi was much damaged, and probably many other places, as the drought was exceptionally continuous. That these fires are often caused through carelessness, and sometimes wilfully, there is no doubt. The present legislation is sufficient to act as a deterrent, if not preventive, if it were enforced. The fact is that people have enjoyed immunity for so long that they are quite indifferent to the damage they do the property of the State. I would, for next summer, suggest the employment of special Rangers, whose sole duty should be to follow up cases of burning of public forests and reserves, for the purpose of bringing safe actions against offenders. For an expenditure of £200 or £300 in one year on Rangers thousands of pounds' worth of forest might be saved. It would also be well to always have conspicuously printed in Land Guides a notification of the penalty for burning forest on the lands of the Crown. At the beginning of every summer there might, for comparatively small expense, be notifications in the daily Press of the Dominion warning people about burning on Crown property.

I am afraid that much of the damage by fire is caused by men who should know better. Men forming new roads, to make things easier, will frequently burn scrub and fern along the grade line, and take no trouble to prevent its devastating the whole adjacent country. Lately at Waimarino the meanderings of a rabbit were marked by the blackened areas of tussock and scrub land he had burned off to make his work easier. Surveyors, too (I am sorry to say), often do great damage in this respect. There should not be much trouble about preventing men in these positions from firing the country; it should simply mean communication with the Departments concerned.