

APPENDIX B.

KAPITI ISLAND.

(H. W. C. MACKINTOSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

THE year just closed must be regarded as one of the best experienced for the last ten years as far as Kapiti is concerned. The almost continual rains which fell throughout the year were ideal for the plant life of the island, and also relieved the Caretaker, Mr. A. S. Wilkinson, from anxiety over the ever present danger of fire. The wealth of flowers produced on almost every species of flowering plant was followed by a great abundance of berries which provided the birds with plenty of food. The Caretaker states that there was more bird food on the reserve than he had ever seen there. There are no grass areas of any extent left on Kapiti except in Taepiro, and that is now being rapidly covered over with manuka, ferns, and shrubs of all kinds. Little trees planted in this place a few years ago are well established, so that in time there will be a good stand of white-pine and rimu there. The boundary-fence at the north end of the reserve should be completed by the end of May. A very useful addition to the equipment on the island was the erection during the year of a telephone-line to the neighbours at the north end. Rats are still in evidence although hundreds of them have been destroyed. A skilled trapper has been engaged, and is doing good work amongst the opossums and rats. Mr. Wilkinson desires to thank the following who so very kindly sent over plants to set out on the reserve:—

- Mr. A. Morris Jones, Kelburn: *Trichomanes rigidum*, *Jovellana repens*, *Cyathodes acerosa*, *Lindsaya linearis*, *Lindsaya viridis*, *Prasophyllum*, *Schizaea fistulosa*, *Metrosideros tomentosa*, *Prosera auriculata*, *Adiantum formosum*. Mr. Jones also found time to assist in planting these species.
- Mrs. Smith, Brooklyn: *Wahlenbergia albomarginata*, *Ranunculus Lyalli*, and a *Celmisia* that I cannot identify; *Mayus radiatus*.
- N.Z. Rock and Alpine Society: *Olearia pachyphylla*, *Chordospartium stevensoni*, *Colensoa physaloides*, *Marrattia fraxinea*, *Adiantum formosa*.
- Mr. E. B. Martin, Nelson: *Olearia cymbifolia*, *Jovellana Sinclairii*, *Asplenium trichomanes*, *Senecio Greyii*, *Senecio Austin*, *Pittosporum Dallii*.
- Mr. J. J. Helyar, Lower Hutt: *Pseudopanax ferox*, *Olearia pachyphylla*, *Dodonaea viscosa*.
- Mr. K. W. Dalrymple, Bulls: *Hymenanthera Novae Zealandia*.
- Mr. W. Knight, Paraparaumu Beach: Thirty-six *Dacrydium cupressinum*.
- Commissioner of Crown Lands, Nelson: Seed of *Pittosporum Dallii*.
- Mrs. Roberts, Vallance Street, Kilbirnie: *Geum parviflorum*.
- Mr. Max Roberts, Vallance Street, Kilbirnie: *Veronica catarractae* (var. *diffusa*), *Veronica Hookeriana*.

I have again to express my high appreciation of the thoroughness and ability with which Mr. Wilkinson carries out his duties as Caretaker. I append hereto extracts from Mr. Wilkinson's annual report:—

"Undergrowth is coming on apace all over the island, amongst the bush, in the manuka, and out in the open. In the bush and under the manuka numerous specimens of the larger trees such as miro, matai, tawa, hinau, and, in some places, even the pukatea can be seen. On some of the ridges and sidelings the undergrowth is 10 ft. or 12 ft. high. These places were absolutely bare ten years ago, as can be shown from photographs. A particularly pleasing feature of the bush is the way the kiekie has spread. This plant is a very useful one for birds of the honey-eating family, as it provides food twice a year. The plant flowers in the spring, and each of these would keep a tui going for at least four days. The male flower is finished then, but the female ripens its pods in May or June, when there are few nectar-producing plants bearing. There are many of these green pods to be seen now.

"In some places along the coast on the eastern side the bush is also creeping down. It was along here that thousands of trees—mostly those species growing on the island—were planted some years ago. Three thousand taupatas and six hundred ngaios were planted in one year along the shore for over a distance of about six miles. Some of the taupatas are now loaded with berries. Another ten years will see this side of the island clothed to the water's edge.

"Along the western side the plants are having a hard struggle, but some of the hardier ones are showing up well. In one or two places manuka is working down the cliffs from the top, and akeake, taupata, kowhai, and the mountain flax are helping to cover this exposed area. Some of the kowhais are from seed I sowed there some years ago. A few of them flowered last season for the first time.

"Both species of flax are spreading well. Last year they were covered with flowers, so the tui and korimako enjoyed sumptuous feasts. There were at least two hundred tuis feeding on the flax close to my house at one time. It was like old times to see so many of these birds together. The wet season seemed to suit the flax, but it evidently had the opposite effect on some of the plants, as no ratas flowered. Usually round about November the rata provides one of the most beautiful pictures, when the hills are blotched with the brilliant scarlet patches. None of the rata species flowered at all but there was a spray or two on the pohutukawa.