

steamers are imperatively called for by travellers who cross the Tasman Sea. It is well known that many Australians, and visitors to that country from abroad, avoid coming to New Zealand solely on account of the comparatively small steamers which ordinarily maintain the service between the Commonwealth and this colony.

#### SCENERY-PRESERVATION.

Vandalism has been responsible for past destruction and waste of some of New Zealand's most beautiful pieces of forest, and, in my opinion, the preservation of scenic bush merits the most serious consideration of the Government. At present this remark applies with force to the conservation of forest along the route of the Main Trunk, Wellington-Auckland, Railway. This line will pass through some magnificent areas of forest, which, if preserved in its primeval beauty contiguous to the railway, will afford a great attraction to travellers generally, and will prove a splendid inducement for those travelling between Wellington and Auckland to go by train instead of by steamer, whereas miles of burnt and blackened logs would prove a weariness to the spirit.

#### IMPORTATION OF GAME.

Some time ago the various acclimatisation societies were asked whether they would be prepared to assist the Government in the importation of game. Most of them responded, offering contributions of money, but stipulating that certain varieties of game should be imported and liberated in their respective districts. The cost of importing the game variously specified would have amounted to a sum largely in excess of contemplated expenditure, and the offers were in many cases unreasonably small in comparison to the demands. The matter was then handed over to this Department. Following this, a circular letter was issued asking whether the acclimatisation societies would assist in importing moose, wapiti, wild geese, and ducks. So far the replies received indicate a general willingness to assist in this work, but in most cases request is made that some of the game imported should be turned out in the district contributing. A notable exception is the Otago Society, which offers £100 without conditions, and agrees to the Government placing the game wherever it deems best.

In my opinion, it would be a mistake to endeavour to import and acclimatise too great a variety of big game. Efforts should be devoted to getting a fair number of suitable animals and insuring success in their acclimatisation. From inquiries which have been made in America I find that moose and wapiti are obtainable. These splendid members of the deer family should be well adapted for acclimatisation in this country. A small herd of moose have already been established on the West Coast. They and wapiti are of the same hardy nature as the Scotch red deer, and should afford magnificent sport on our forest-clad ranges, and provide the very best training in the use of rifle and camp life for our future military defenders. The above-mentioned animals successfully acclimatised would undoubtedly be the means of attracting wealthy sportsmen not only to visit, but to reside permanently in this country. Letters from India indicate this very clearly, as those from intending settlers nearly all ask what sport is to be had in New Zealand.

Owing to the decimation of pheasants, quail, and native birds by stoats, weasels, poisoned grain, and bush-fires, I do not recommend that the importation of birds other than water-fowl should be attempted. To do so under existing conditions would be, in my opinion, a waste of money. New Zealand being a magnificently watered country, its lakes, lagoons, and rivers afford most favourable conditions for the breeding of water-fowl, which are not adversely affected by vermin or bush-fires, and, if at all, to a very small extent by poisoned grain. I would therefore recommend that the Government should confine its efforts for the present to importing the above-mentioned animals and two species of water-fowl—say, Canadian geese and a good variety of duck; also that the assistance of those societies who are prepared to waive local claims and contribute a quota for the general benefit of the colony should be accepted.

During last year six red deer were liberated at Lake Waikaremoana in the same locality as the previous lots, and ten on Stewart Island, six of the latter being obtained from Victoria. Forty brace of those fine game birds, paradise-ducks, were obtained from the South Island, and are to be liberated in various parts of the North Island as soon as the present shooting season expires. The Union Steamship Company have generously carried game for this Department without charge. The Railway Department also made no charge for its transit.

#### DEER-STALKING.

Deer-stalking in New Zealand is attracting attention in other lands by the fine quality of the trophies obtainable, and, during the last season—March and April—visitors came from Australia, Canada, India, and Great Britain purposely to stalk red deer.

Notwithstanding the limitation of five heads per license fixed by the Government, reports to hand show that there has been a great deal of wanton destruction of deer in the Wairarapa district, some license-holders shooting large numbers of deer, irrespective of age or sex. As neither the venison nor skins are made use of, this destruction is altogether inexcusable. As a check against indiscriminate slaughter of this sort, and to provide in a measure some good stalking for genuine sportsmen, especially those from distant countries who may be induced to come here by the reputation of the colony as a sporting resort, I would recommend for consideration of the Government that all that piece of forest lying between Martinborough and the Cape River, locally known as the "Government Bush," should be proclaimed a deer-forest, permission to shoot therein being granted to individuals only on approval of the Government. This bush has, I understand, little or no value as timber, and the land is very rough and of poor quality. Unless some action of the kind is quickly taken the fame of the deer-herds of the Wairarapa will soon be a thing of the past. This Department could undertake the protection of deer in this forest against illegal slaughter.