

TROUT-FISHING.

Trout-fishing during the past season was excellent in most of the fishing districts.

Anglers complain that the large amount of licensed netting which takes place in Lake Rotorua is rapidly spoiling the fishing in it and its tributaries. As showing the extent to which netting is carried on, I may mention that poundage was paid on 10,806 lb. ($4\frac{3}{4}$ tons) of trout which was forwarded from Rotorua by railway last season; this was, of course, in addition to local consumption. This heavy tax on the fish in these waters cannot continue without depleting them to a very serious extent.

At Queenstown the residents are very much concerned at the present scarcity of trout in Lake Wakatipu, and also at their alleged deterioration in quality. Systematic legalised netting has been extensively carried on in that lake for between fifteen and twenty years. The lessee of the waters for last season informed me that he generally set as many as sixty-five nets at one time. This being so, the cause of depletion is not difficult to trace. A deputation representing the Lake County Council and the Queenstown Municipal Council which waited on me urged that the Fisheries Inspector, Mr. Ayson, should be sent to report on the questions of conservation and improvement of trout in that district.

A very general desire has been expressed by anglers that they should be afforded legal right of way along the beds of trout-streams which run through privately owned lands. Generally speaking, access to such streams may be obtained by asking, but in some cases good trout-streams are reserved by the landowners for the purpose of leasing the right to fish therein, or for the exclusive use of themselves and friends. This question is one of such wide issue that I do not feel called on to make any recommendation regarding it.

ETHNOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

Maori carvings, weapons, implements, and ornaments are being constantly taken out of the colony by visitors, and genuine articles illustrative of Maori life in former times are daily becoming more rare. With the exception of the Auckland Museum, there is no public collection of Native weapons, implements, &c., of sufficient size and variety to prove interesting to students of ethnology in the colony or to visitors from abroad. I would strongly recommend for the early and serious consideration of the Government the question of establishing an ethnological museum for the colony.

REPORT ON LITTLE BARRIER ISLAND.

SIR,—

Auckland Museum, Auckland, 26th May, 1902.

I have the honour to forward the following report on the Little Barrier Island:—

As you are aware, the Auckland Institute acts as custodian of the island, the Government contributing an annual grant of £200 to cover the cost of maintenance. Of this sum, £150 is devoted to the salary of the resident curator, Mr. Shakespear. The balance of £50 is absorbed by the numerous small expenses necessary to keep the curator in his position on the island, and to enable him to exercise proper vigilance over it. The chief of these expenses are as follows: (1) To provide means of communication with the island during the intervals between the trips of the "Hinemoa," so that the curator may obtain the stores necessary for the support of himself and his family; (2) to keep in good order and condition a small sailing-boat, so that the curator may regularly visit the northern portion of the island, which is inaccessible by land, and which it would be unsafe to leave unwatched; (3) insurance, repairs to house and buildings, &c.

The curator has resided on the island for the whole of the year. He reports that no attempt whatever has been made to land for the purpose of molesting the birds, or any other portion of the fauna. From a small hill at the back of his house a view can be obtained of the shore, stretching from the south-east corner to the western side. During favourable weather the other part of the island is regularly visited, and, as it is only during such weather that a landing can be effected on the north side of the island, it can safely be concluded that the island has not been visited by collectors. He further reports that birds of all kinds are abundant, and that from their behaviour it is evident that they have not been interfered with. I may say that this statement agrees with what I noticed myself during a visit of inspection made about a year ago.

In accordance with his instructions, the curator has kept open a track leading from his house to the top of the highest peak on the island, which attains a height of 2,450 ft. All other tracks necessary for the inspection of the southern side of the island are kept in good order; but in other parts of the island it has been thought advisable to allow the old Maori tracks to become overgrown, as if kept open they might be the means of allowing people surreptitiously landing on the island to rapidly reach the interior and conceal themselves there.

The only enemy to the native birds on the island appears to be the wild cat. No doubt these were introduced by the Maoris during their occupancy of the island. By poisoning and trapping their numbers have been much reduced, and they are now seldom seen.

The house and all other buildings on the island are in a good state of repair, and are well looked after by the curator, who also keeps up a large garden. Visitors by the "Hinemoa" usually express their surprise at seeing the neat and well-tended appearance of the homestead and its surroundings.

On the whole, there appears to be every reason for believing that, if a resident curator is maintained on the island to prevent the visits of collectors, the indigenous birds will keep up their numbers for many years to come.

It may not be out of place to suggest that it would be well for the Government to obtain some living huias for liberation on the island. They are rapidly decreasing in their special locality, and the only hope of saving them is probably to transfer some to a habitat where they can be carefully protected.

I have, &c.,

T. E. Donne, Esq.

T. F. CHEESEMAN, Secretary.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,675 copies), £18 11s. 9d.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1902.

Price 9d.]