

## APPENDIX VI.—KAPITI ISLAND.

KAPITI Island lies off the coast of the Wellington District, nearly opposite Paraparaumu. It contains an area of 4,990 acres, of which the Natives still retain the northern portion, containing 1,009 acres, the balance being a public reserve acquired under the provisions of the Kapiti Island Public Reserves Act, 1897. Of the Crown area, 1,779 acres is under forest. The land was acquired for the purpose of a sanctuary for native fauna and flora, and was the subject of special inspection and report by Dr. Cockayne, F.R.S., in 1907. He was of opinion that the island contained most valuable plant formation, and thought it was very suitable for the purposes for which it had been set apart. A caretaker has resided on the island for many years past, and every endeavour is made to ensure that plant and bird life is protected as far as possible.

The following reports are of interest as showing the present conditions relative to the bird-life:—

## REPORT BY E. PHILLIPS TURNER, F.R.G.S., INSPECTOR.

I made a visit of inspection to Kapiti Island in the middle of May, and I am glad to be able to report that I saw no evidence of the reported decrease in the number of native birds. On the contrary, I found bell-birds, tuis, and whiteheads to be very numerous, and, though the weather was dull and unfavourable, I saw a fair number of pigeons, kakas, tomtits, robins, and kingfishers; fantails, parakeets, and wrens were seen in less quantity. The weka is more numerous there than in any other place I know of. Along the coast I saw one or two blue herons and numerous cormorants. At night moreporks can be heard. I saw several of the large kind of hawk. It might perhaps be advisable to have the hawks shot, as they live almost entirely on other birds, and, moreover, they are not likely to be killed out on the mainland.

The kakapos and kiwis liberated about a year ago have not since been seen. I think it highly desirable that a few pairs of the North and South Island crows, South Island robins and canaries, pukekos, and land-rail should be placed on the island before they become extinct.

The Australian opossum has become very plentiful on the island. As they will compete with the birds for the available food-supply, I think they should be trapped and their skins sold.

There is a marked decrease in the number of goats since my inspection in January, 1912. I think those left should be soon exterminated, employing if necessary additional temporary help.

Noxious weeds are practically now eradicated.

There are still a few cats, but, as poisoned fish is being laid, they should soon be killed out.

It is highly desirable that the small remaining Native interests in the south and middle parts of the island be acquired. Then the boundary between the large Maori block at the north end and the sanctuary could be fenced off, and there would be no further bother with trespassing sheep. If the Maori land at the northern end be acquired it will be necessary to farm it and have a manager there, as the land is too valuable to be allowed to revert to tauhinu and tea-tree. The caretaker's cottage was completed last year, and he is now in a comfortable building that should last for fifty years.

All things considered, I think there is a distinct improvement in the condition of the island since my inspection made in January, 1912.

## YEARLY REPORT BY CARETAKER (MR. J. L. BENNETT).

Everything on the island in a satisfactory condition. A splendid nesting season; noticeable increase in birds, especially in pigeons, tuis, bell-birds, and wekas. Berries abundant. No sign of blackberry, and only one patch of brier. Goats are mostly confined to the scrub at the south end of the island; 335 have been destroyed during the year. Cats are not numerous, four only having been seen and destroyed. Rainfall during year, 40 inches 97 points.