

reserves and areas for preservation of the fauna and flora are sanctuaries.

Regarding the depredations of cats and rats, the island of Ulva furnishes an important object-lesson. This beautiful island, now a scenic reserve, is well cared for by Mr. Walter Traill, whose dogs allow no cats to exist, and also keep the rats in check, while he himself is able to prevent shooting on the island. The consequence is that certain of the birds—e.g., the bellbird, now quite wanting in the neighbourhood of settlements—is still extremely abundant.

AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITIES.

The agricultural statistics for the Dominion give a clear idea of the present position of Stewart Island with regard to farming. Thus, so far as domestic animals are concerned, there are merely 6 horses, 24 pigs, 264 cattle, and 1492 sheep. Similarly, the agricultural plant-covering consists of 68 acres of pasture (laid down), 557 acres of surface-sown land, 1 acre of corn crop, 7 acres of green crops, 19 acres of gardens, orchards, and plantations, and 23,486 acres of unimproved grass land. If the latter be taken into account, the amount of stock seems ridiculously small, but a considerable part of the so-called grass land—perhaps one-half—is occupied by bogs, swamps, heath, and dunes, the vegetation of which is worthless; while on the other part the plants available for "feed" certainly do not form more than one-fourth of the plant-covering. The only farms—and these are but of a few acres, the land being frequently only partially cleared—are in the neighbourhood of Half-moon Bay, the adjacent shores of Paterson Inlet, and the Neck, the latter more especially feeding the greater portion of the sheep. Were the Mason Bay run occupied, the number of sheep would be greater, but the total which could be carried under present conditions would be trifling for an island of more than 425,000 acres.

However, it is not the present condition of affairs which concerns us here, but rather the question as to the value of the island as a whole and in the future for farming purposes. To this the preceding botanical part of the report furnishes a clear answer. There it has been shown that the present soil and climatic conditions have clothed the mountains above the forest-line—the part, indeed, of much moment to the sheep-farmer in the Southern Alps—with an absolutely worthless vegetation

from the grazing standpoint. Furthermore, the ecological conditions which favour such a vegetation are altogether antagonistic to the growth of pasture plants. Even were the land to be drained and the sub-alpine scrub burned, the climate most adverse to stock could not be suppressed. So, too, with the open lands of the lower country, where the alpine umbrellaf-fern and *Hypolaena lateriflora*, covering acres at a time, testify to the worthlessness of the land, and where the one indigenous grass in any abundance is the red tussock (*danthonia raolii*), a plant rejected by most animals.

The capabilities of Stewart Island as a pleasure and health resort can hardly be overestimated. That it will eventually be celebrated, not only in New Zealand, but throughout Australia, is certain.

Even at the present time hundreds visit the island during the summer months, notwithstanding the inadequate means of transport over Foveaux Strait, and the available accommodation is taxed to excess. Boating, excellent fishing, bathing, picnics under the most delightful surroundings, scenery of the highest character, walks through unspoiled forest full of ferns, with glimpses of sea or mountain through the greenery, and, for the more ambitious, mountain-climbs or yachting on the actual ocean—these are amongst the attractions at present offered. Within a mile's radius of Half-moon Bay as a centre, a dozen easy walks may be taken, each different, and all equally delightful. The beautiful islet of Ulva is distant by boat some half-hour; a good path traverses it from end to end, and the visitor passes through a perfect piece of virgin forest.

And this brings me to that feature which gives the island its special and perhaps some day unique value. The face of the earth is changing so rapidly that soon, in temperate regions at any rate, there will be little of primitive Nature left. In the Old World it is practically gone for ever. Here, then, is Stewart Island's prime advantage, and one hard to overestimate. It is an actual piece of the primeval world.

It is hard to speak of the scenery of Stewart Island without using a superabundance of superlatives. There is, indeed, no part but is delightful, and in many spots it is unsurpassed by the best that New Zealand as a whole can offer. Paterson Inlet and Port Pegasus, with their numerous wooded islets, deep or shallow indentations, and hid-