

of the birds is being shown, both by the Department, who went to much trouble in making enquiries, and by the company concerned, who have issued instructions that the bird life on the island is not to be interfered with in any way. In past years mutton birds and gannets' eggs have been taken in large numbers at the island by Maoris, but, thanks to the company, this practice has now been forbidden.

Let us hope that this is the dawn of a better day for our native birds, and that such kindly interest will be shown for them elsewhere in New Zealand.

The story of the Peruvian guano deposits is a truly interesting one, demonstrating the judgment required when exploiting such deposits. Originally estimated to last 1,500 years, they were leased to American companies, which quickly removed the guano, almost destroyed the rookeries and the millions of birds. Even Peru was left with insufficient fertiliser for her agricultural needs. Drastic steps were taken to conserve the remnant of the birds, and the rookeries were strictly tapued during the nesting season, with the result that the deposits are being re-formed. Each bird is estimated to be worth 15 dollars to the Peruvian Government, so great is the wealth produced.

Gannets, like other birds, have good reasons for nesting in particular places, and no doubt White Island is chosen because large numbers of small fish are present when food is specially required.

In reference to this, Major Mercer, the owner of the island, makes some very interesting observations. He states: "It may be of interest to the Society to know that for a period of about a month this summer the sea between Tauranga and White Island had a churned-up appearance, and a vast amount of floating kelp had been thrown up from the bottom. This submarine disturbance caused a great scarcity of fish for fully three weeks, and during this period it was noticed that the gannets, instead of fishing, as is their wont, a few hundred yards from the island and returning every two or three hours with food for their young, disappeared in the early morning and returned late in the afternoon, often with no food. Every female gannet arriving at the rookery would be surrounded by a horde of starving youngsters, many of which would fight each other until one or the other was seriously injured. There is no doubt that a great loss in young birds took place during this month. This was a great pity, because most of them had reached the stage when they were nearly fit to fly.