

but what I would like to know is what exactly is your object in establishing these reserves? Are they merely beauty spots set aside for picnic parties, or are they reserves for the preservation of native plants? If, as I hope is the case, they are the latter, it is nothing short of a scandal that in the Tongariro National Park, for instance, heather should have been introduced, and that goats should be allowed to wax fat on the growth on Mount Egmont. In Switzerland reserves are reserves, and the greatest precautions are adopted to prevent the introduction of alien plants. In New Zealand, in some instances at any rate, your policy seems to be to create a reserve and then fill it with foreign plants or animals, much to the detriment of the native growth. Your native flora is such that it needs no outside assistance to make it attractive. What is needed seems to me to be a botanical expert to advise upon the policy in respect to your reserves." And we would suggest also an ornithologist, for the welfare of the birds and the forest is intimately connected.

The mania for acclimatisation, or the establishment of foreign animals and plants, perhaps more prevalent in New Zealand than in any other country, is a most insidious form of vandalism. In reserves and national parks it is a sin against posterity, and an everlasting reproach to New Zealand, that such a process should not only be allowed, but should actually in many cases be deliberately and actively encouraged by persons in authority whose patriotism, scorning those natural beauties which embody the very spirit of our country, rises no higher than a desire to create in New Zealand a paltry imitation of other lands.

The second line, then, which active protection must take, is a vigorous campaign against aliens—plant and animal—in the sanctuaries and reserves, above all, against the rats, feral cats, stoats and weasels. The two latter were intentionally introduced as a measure against the plague of rabbits, themselves also deliberately imported. But Australia, which suffers far more than New Zealand from the rabbit pest, refused to believe that two wrongs could make a right, and has therefore never followed New Zealand's bad example in introducing stoats and weasels. In the latter Dominion an Order-in-Council in 1923 declared stoats and weasels to be the natural enemies of the rabbit throughout the country, and so these bloodthirsty little animals, widespread through the forests where rabbits do not exist, *may not be destroyed* save by special permission granted by Inspectors of Stock, and effective only on sanctuaries, poultry-farms, and game-raising establishments. In any case, a campaign against vermin cannot be undertaken without vastly more caretakers and skilled rangers than are at present employed. No fewer than 39 islands and groups of islets round the coast are gazetted under various Acts as bird sanctuaries, but only two have curators.