

and perhaps prevents for ever the elucidation of puzzling forms. It is *species* we should preserve—not *mongrels*."

After all very little is known of the habits of our rare birds in New Zealand, and it must be evident that the area where the bird is making its last stand against the inroads of civilisation must be adapted to the bird's food and other requirements. Dr. Cockayne tells us that the plant life in New Zealand varies in a remarkable manner in comparatively adjacent areas, which fact probably accounts for certain species inhabiting particular localities, as witness the Huia being found only along the mountain range between Wellington and Hawkes Bay. Presumably its necessary routine of food supply was procurable only in its habitat. Therefore, it appears that the methods adopted in older and more experienced countries than New Zealand are likely to be more successful than this aviary notion of transferring numbers of species on to sanctuaries where they have never been known to exist. This method is to make a sanctuary of the area where the threatened species still exists. Then put a competent man or men in charge to destroy exotic enemies, keep out collectors, poachers, etc., and generally assist the dying species in its last fight against the inroads of the white man. This method saved the stitchbird in New Zealand, the egret in Egypt, the eider duck and whistling swan in Canada, etc., etc., while the saving of the trumpeter swan is now being undertaken in Canada; and these threatened species did not increase by one or two dozen, which is the best one could expect on a small sanctuary, but by thousands, and to these numbers in a remarkably short period. Surely then with these facts in mind, the pros and cons of this transferring of birds, which it is noticed is condemned by the Conservation Commission of California, should be carefully considered before taking action and spending time and money when dire and urgent needs receive scant or no attention, such as the German owl, deer, goat, and other menaces.

It must also be borne in mind that most individual pairs of birds have their territory and keep other members of the same species or those of similar food habits, out of their territory if possible. Thus the transferred bird or birds have to establish themselves and fight their way for an area when in poor condition owing to confinement. And with reference to this phase of the matter, it might be stated that the saddlebacks which were liberated on Little Barrier some three years back were harried by tuis on the second day after liberation, and never heard of again, while those liberated on Kapiti are reported as being still present some twelve months back. Bellbirds liberated in Waipoua kauri forest, a most unsuitable area for such birds, have never been reported as being seen since their liberation. Failure, with loss of effort and money, is the usual result of experiments in transferring birds. Further, out of some thirty species of game birds introduced into New Zealand at considerable cost, only two or three species have survived.