

This, it is feared, is often merely a pretext to make a road for the convenience of some politically favoured saw-miller. Next we hear the cry, timber shortage, or unemployed sawmillers, and by such means the sawmiller gets his way to be followed later by fire, scenery destruction, erosion and a £50,000,000 reforestation scheme. All this sort of thing is to-day being contemplated in the Urewera. When this forest is damaged the occupiers of the rich flats in the Bay of Plenty district pay the piper in having to replace bridges, control rivers, and put up with the scouring away of their lands. And well they deserve to suffer if at this juncture they look on idly by while the fell scheme is initiated.

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE BIRDS.

In a communication to *The London Times*, Dr. Axel Munthe writes:—

My attention has been drawn to a recently published letter from a passing visitor to Capri, stating that in spite of the island having been declared a bird sanctuary the bird-slaughter continues as before.

Since my letter to *The Times* under the heading "To Those Who Love Birds" I have received over 900 letters from unknown readers of your paper rejoicing with me in Mussolini's decree. I wish these bird-lovers to know that the above-mentioned statement from Capri is incorrect. Since November 9, when the decree proclaiming Capri a bird sanctuary became law, not a single shot has been fired on the island, not even at me.

It is true that a good many birds are still caught in snares and traps, but the local authorities are now fully aware of their responsibility and are trying their best to put a stop to this thousand years old practice, a far from easy task, not to be accomplished in one year.

When I left Capri some weeks ago the whole island was full of bird song. There was a farewell concert in the garden of Materita, in my honour, with a jubilant chorus of blackbirds, turtle-doves, chiff-chaffs, garden warblers, flycatchers, goldfinches, blackcaps, woodlarks, linnets, yellow-hammers, and whitebreasts. The programme also included a beautiful *adagio* for flute by a golden oriol, an old-fashioned, tender ballad for mezzo-soprano by a blue rock thrush, and a sad little folk-song by a willow-warbler from a bush of rosemary. From the top of an olive tree even a weather-bound cuckoo, still somewhat shaky in his vocal cords after his long sea journey and rather out of tune with his unfamiliar surroundings, insisted on having his say, amidst peals of laughter from dozens of merry chaffinches.