

WHOSE NEW ZEALAND?

Anybody's or Everybody's?

There is an old saying, as true now as when it was first uttered: "What is everybody's business is nobody's business."

Surely it should be everybody's business to insist on a policy for the conservation of New Zealand's life-sustaining resources, but this country has never had a Parliament or a Government which has given whole-hearted and clear-minded attention to this national need. At intervals, individual Ministers of the Crown have taken a statesmanlike view of the field, but they have been more or less isolated cases. Indeed some Governments in the past were guilty of disastrous ignorance and short-sightedness when they insisted on the clearing of priceless forests on steep watersheds when land was leased or sold to Crown tenants.

To-day, in many parts of the country one may see very grave offences against the public interest by individuals who believe that they have a perfect right to do whatever they like on their land regardless of the consequences to other people of this generation and posterity. Some are guilty of pollution of rivers. Some allow rabbits or noxious weeds to increase on their land. Others destroy the forest cover on rugged high country. The time is long overdue for effective restraint of the individual liberty which, in some cases by stupid action and in other cases by careless neglect, proves harmful to national welfare.

"COLLECTING" MUST CEASE.

No Need For It.

Even the famous Sir Walter Buller, who was a nature-lover, felt more thrill in "collecting" rare birds than he did in their songs or other charm. He shot a pair of mated huias while they were caressing each other with their beaks.

If a great Buller would commit that crime (which he himself confessed in one of his books), what would not some of the comparatively "small fry" do?

Buller killed specimens of nearly all species of native birds, skinned them, and examined the bodies and skeletons in all manner of ways. He did the job carefully, and recorded the results of his observations in English and Latin for the wide world to read.

New Zealand's birds have also been overhauled by other scientists. There is nothing new to be learned about their beaks, tails, wings, bones and general structure. Why, then, is it necessary to have any further collecting of skins and skeletons?