

take little notice of. A new extension to the hut was being built and the birds showed the greatest interest in the wood and tools which were lying about. Everything unusual they examined with the greatest interest. They would also come round and watch the workmen at their various jobs.

A carrot is a great attraction to them; if it is cut into small pieces it will attract a crowd. If one throws the pieces towards the birds they dodge as quick as lightning out of the way as though they expected a stone or some other missile to be thrown; then they come up cautiously and pick up the bits. Sometimes a bird will tolerate another quite close to it, and at other times they make furious digs at each other. It is very amusing to watch a bird trying to push another away with its foot, especially if it is trying to push it over the cliff. The one on the defensive will hang on as long as possible until it is finally forced to take flight. *Sometimes a bird will trot up to another and affectionately lay its head against the other's.*

### **A Human Element.**

*I think the fascination of the kea lies in the fact that it has such a human element in its nature. I could have spent months watching them and their curious habits. I often wondered whether, if only their persecutors knew them as intimately as I did, they would have the heart to massacre them as they do.*

Thanks to the untiring efforts of the New Zealand Native Bird Protection Society and a few other enlightened people, the Government subsidy has been taken off the head of the kea. At one time it was 7s. 6d., then it dropped to 5s., later to 2s. 6d., and now it is nothing at all.

It was not for love of the kea that the subsidy was taken off; far from that. The argument the N.Z.N.B.P.S. used was: why should the taxpayer have to pay for ridding the sheep farms of birds? Why should a man buy a farm over-run with keas and the taxpayer be asked to pay for the clearance and give him a good income into the bargain? Why did not the Government pay for rats, mice, rabbits, etc.? There was a publicity campaign, and a deputation saw various Ministers. The money question saved the day. It was the old, old story of why should some one pay for some one else. The old saying, "The hand that signs the cheque book rules the world" is very true. The fate of the kea didn't matter a little bit. They could have pleaded for ever for the bird, but when the money question came up, ah, well! That was a totally different matter!

### **A Case of Personal Profit.**

*When the subsidy of 5s. per head was being paid many shepherds supplemented their incomes by shooting the birds. They would take up small pea rifles and at a distance of a few feet would*