

Guilt of Deer and Goats Proved

(By Witness).

In striking contrast with the airy plea for the preservation of deer by Lord Latymer (a devotee of stalking) various accurate observers can point to the far-reaching mischief of those animals in native forests.

For example, in the Palliser Bay area, Wellington, one sees gaunt mountain ranges consisting of masses of rock lightly covered with soil (the scant remains of the humus of ages) which for centuries supported luxuriant vegetation.



The old forest is nearly dead; floor covering is practically gone; a washout has begun. The roots, once protected by the undergrowth, now exposed, spread about in octopus-like shapes.

This type of country needs an abundance of undergrowth in order to hold the soil and prevent the hilltops slipping away as shale slides and ruining the valleys below. In the Palliser Bay area deer, goats and other pests have destroyed much of the undergrowth, and the remaining forest

consists of old trees which will die much sooner than they should because denudation of the undergrowth has destroyed their natural protection. Among the few native plants which seem capable of resisting the onslaughts of the deer and goats are the kie-kie and one or two species of the koromiko; nevertheless even where such plants are growing fairly densely there is no floor covering and the stones roll. One notices a total absence of any young trees such as mahoe, pate, hangehange, whau-whaupaku and so on; of course there are no young trees of the larger forest types.

Much of the Palliser Bay area is State Forest. Some action to clean out the goats is urgently necessary. Fire and sheep, of course, contribute to the damage, but fire is avoidable, and sheep do not penetrate far into bush, unless their entry is made practicable by the more agile goats and deer. The big menace is a combination of goat, deer, domestic cattle and opossum, in that order of importance.



Erosion which took place in 1935 in the lower valley, the result of the enormous quantities of water released too quickly by the uncovered ranges above.