

end of the Second World War in 1945. The Society was already well known, but still had grown to only 800 members. He acted most times as secretary as well.

He saw to it that the name was changed at long last in 1934 from the Native Bird Protection Society to the Forest and Bird Protection Society, which was "a more fitting designation seeing that there cannot be native birds without native forests and native forests without native birds. Each is essential to the existence of the other; both are essential to human welfare."

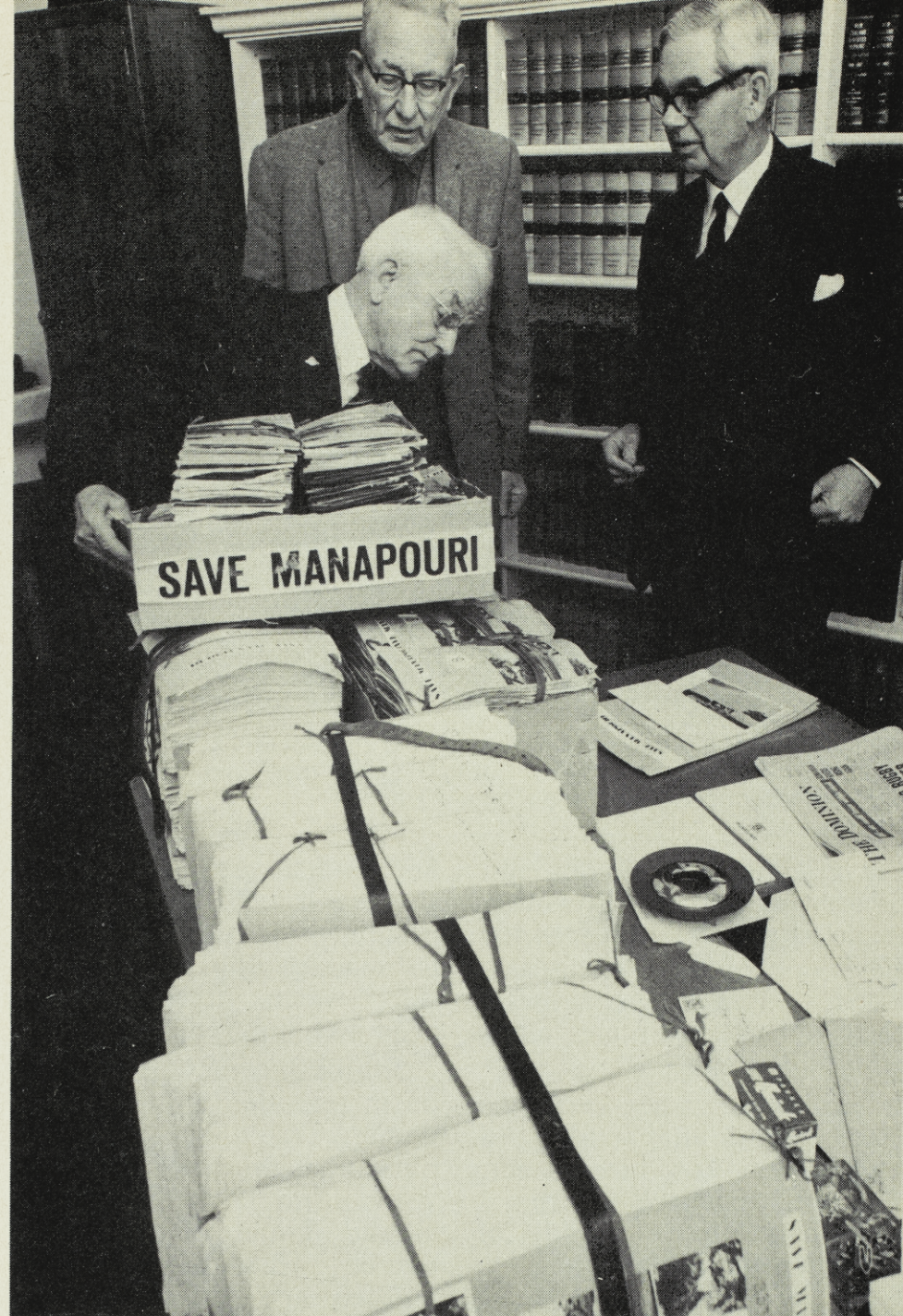
Then that great botanist and soil scientist B. C. Aston was president from 1946 to 1948. His contributions to science are well known and the Society's image grew with him. He was not a shadowy figure to the many who knew him, and, as with Cockayne, the plant species lists contain his name as a memorial.

The Harper years

By 1948 the Society boasted 1200 members, and a most adventurous soul took over the presidency for the next 7 years. He was Arthur P. Harper, the famous explorer and mountaineer. Born in 1865, he had explored the Westland Alps with Mr Explorer Douglas right down the chain to Fiordland in those halcyon days of roadless wilderness and unbridged rivers.

We have all come to the platform of real caring for our vanishing birds and forests, but just consider some of his writings of early days, before even he became a conservationist and the president of the Society from 1948 to 1955. His extraordinary tastes when living off the land would horrify us now. He wrote:

"**The weka.** As food the weka is strongly flavoured and



Evening Post photo

The organisation of the 1970 Save Manapouri petition was a huge undertaking for the Society. After the historic petition had been prepared and packed the 264 907 signatures were handed over to the Minister of Justice, Mr D. J. Riddiford, by the president, Mr R. C. Nelson (at back) and the secretary, Mr D. A. McCurdy, for presentation to Parliament.

when in condition he gives off about $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of oil when boiled. This we mixed with flour to make a sort of shortbread. The oil is first rate for softening leather and for rheumatism. Another way we cooked wekas was to thrust a red-hot stone inside and toast them by the fire, thus cooking them inside and out in 20 minutes.

"**Keas.** My old mate Douglas used to compare keas to tough mutton with fiddle strings threaded through it. They

certainly make a poor feed, but often we were hungry enough to tackle anything, even keas.

"**The kakapo.** For food they are better than wekas, one bird making a plenteous meal for two men and also rendering a quantity of light straw coloured, almost flavourless oil.

"**The kiwi.** This bird is hopeless as food, having the most nauseous flesh and providing little to eat unless one cares to try its thick skin and