

DEER DESTRUCTION

Evidence of Damage to Forest Floors

SIR,—It should not be necessary to make any comment on the two long articles by Mr. Wendell Endicott in your issues of July 4 and 11, but just in case any of your readers should swallow the amazing suggestions he makes, it is perhaps wise to enlighten them. His suggestions are simply that we should sacrifice our countryside for the sake of a few sportsmen who wish to shoot deer.

It is, or should be, elementary knowledge to a New Zealander that New Zealand having evolved without mammals is not "geared" for their presence and has developed no natural protection against them, unlike America where they are part of the natural order. It is difficult to understand how Mr. Endicott failed to understand this.

Cockayne, writing about deer destruction, speaks of these "priceless forests of ours" being in imminent danger of being turned into debris fields and waste grounds and the water pouring down the naked slopes bearing with it heavy loads of stones and silt to bury the fertile arable lands below. This is precisely what has happened in some places and what would happen all over New Zealand if the deer were unmolested; it has been overwhelmingly proved and it takes more than the "warning" (see your heading) of an overseas traveller to disprove it.

Deer, if left alone, will increase in New Zealand at the rate of at least 25 per cent. per annum, some authorities put it as high as 40 per cent., and the reason why they are not increasing to that extent now and why Mr. Endicott has seen miles of bush growing "in spite of the game" is that since 1930, when the Government woke up to them, they have had their natural enemies, if the hunters of the Internal Affairs Department can be so called. But, make no mistake, they would immediately increase again if left unmolested.

Mr. Wendell Endicott concludes his articles by asking, "Does New Zealand appreciate its present position—its opportunities to support a paradise of game?" One might as well ask a man if he appreciates his opportunities to

support a paradise of typhoid germs! Nature never intended New Zealand to support game. New Zealand used to be a paradise of birds and this has changed in living memory, owing to the introduction of pests, deer among them. New Zealand has been entrusted with a heritage of natural resources unique in the world, and it is our bounden duty to eliminate all that harms it and endeavour to restore our country to its early glory. We could then show marvels, the unique forests, the unique birds, whose melody Captain Cook said was "infinitely superior to any that we had ever heard of the same kind," which would have a far greater tourist attraction than game, which is not unique.

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PHOTOGRAPHS taken by the State Forest Service showing damage done by deer and other introduced animals. Right: Mature beech trees and undergrowth killed in the Haurangi State Forest. Below, left: Erosion follows destruction of undergrowth in the Palliser Bay area. Right: A young tree, barked and dying



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spontaneous tribute to a good performance, and resolves itself into a kind of tug-of-war or endurance test between audience and performers with the object of seeing how many encores the latter can be persuaded to contribute.

There have been attempts, notably in Germany, to do away with all expressions of emotion by audiences. Such attempts have seldom succeeded, but an American friend of mine told me a story of a visit she once paid to a performance in Germany of one of Wagner's operas, in one of those opera houses where a Wagnerian evening is (or was) regarded as an almost sacred occasion. The leading soprano, a majestic Saxon blonde, swept on to the stage, tripped, and fell into the orchestra pit. The only sound from the auditorium was the roar of American laughter from my friend.

—J.M.D.H.