

# RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

## Problems Which Face Australia and N.Z.

SOME years ago New Zealand had two schools of forestry. The authorities decided to concentrate on one. That one was closed temporarily during the depression, and has remained closed. But the need for training foresters hasn't stopped. On the contrary, it has become more insistent. We have the remains of our great native forests, and large plantations of exotic trees. Many problems are involved in the best management of both. And compared with a generation ago, New Zealand people are much more tree-minded. So the University of New Zealand invited Professor S. M. Wadham, Professor of Agriculture, Melbourne University, to visit New Zealand and advise it about the training of foresters.

Professor Wadham is an Englishman, a graduate of Cambridge, but he has been in Australia for a good many years, and has been active outside his lecture-room. He is a member of the Rural Reconstruction Commission set up in 1943 by the Federal Government, which has issued several reports and is still at work. He is also a member of the Victorian Advisory Committee on

Radio Talks. He gives as his recreation, "Talking." Altogether, therefore, it was fitting that he should be asked to say something for the benefit of *Listener* readers about his mission here, and various aspects of rural life in Australia.

### Trees and Soils

Professor Wadham spoke of "the really urgent need for advanced training in forestry" as the reason for his being in New Zealand. New problems were going to arise, such as the effect of plantations on soils, and ways in which soil deficiencies in afforested land might be corrected. They had found in Australia that in certain areas such deficiencies affected the growth of trees, just as they did the growth of crops and pasture.

Then there was the utilisation of forest products. "It is quite clear that New Zealand now has a larger area planted than it will require for its own purposes. That means more export of timber or the development of new industries in which timber will be used."

We said something about erosion. Yes, he had noticed it. Obviously erosion was going on where it shouldn't, but it didn't follow that every bare patch on

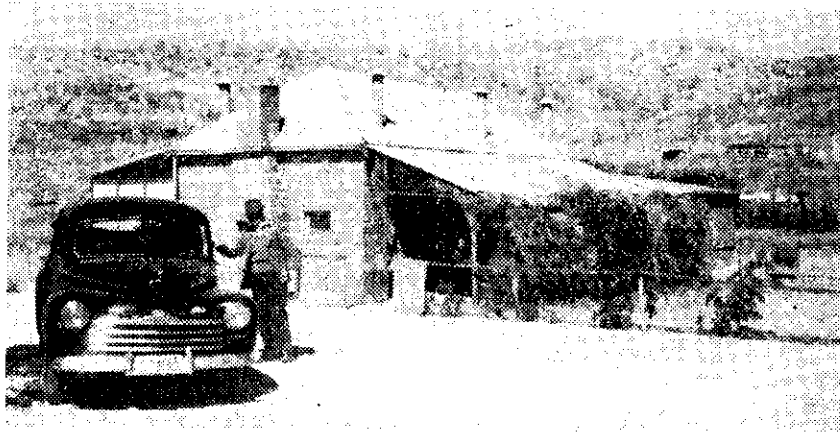
a hillside was the fault of man. It was nature's way, and it began before the European started to farm the hill country.

"Flying down from Auckland, and looking out over the country, it struck me that farming must be difficult among

those hills. Some of the land, I'm told, has gone back to nature."

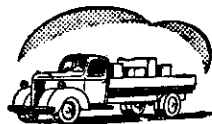
We assured him this was so, and together looked over a map of the North Island and discussed the effect of forest destruction in the back country and the difficulties of farmers faced with secondary growth and perhaps insufficient capital to deal with it.

"Erosion is serious in some parts of Australia," said Professor Wadham. "It takes various forms. Wind erosion has moved large masses of sand in some



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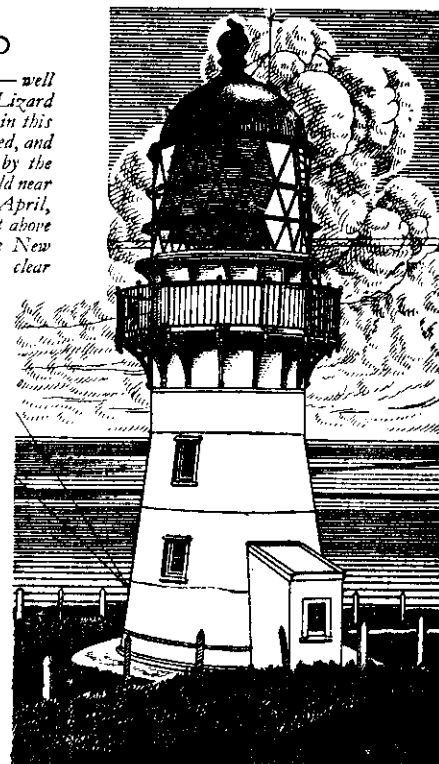
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### NO. 11 STEPHENS ISLAND

The lighthouse on Stephens Island — well known as the home of the *Tuatara Lizard* — was erected in 1894. A light in this part of Cook Strait was sorely needed, and the decision to build was hastened by the stranding of the barque *Weatherfield* near the mouth of the Ohau River in April, 1888. The Lighthouse is 600 feet above sea level and most powerful of the New Zealand lights, being visible in clear weather for 32 miles.

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