

(continued from previous page)

Nor is it reasonable to blame the government that allowed dredging to begin or later governments for allowing it to continue. Governments give effect to public opinion or disappear. If they grant privileges or issue licences it is for purposes for which the majority approve. Before they revoke an authority they believe that public support for it has already been lost.

There has been no clear enough signal yet that the West Coast has turned against dredging. There has been a half-hearted demand all over the Dominion that mining should not be allowed to destroy good land. It has been half-hearted as a demand, more than half ignored as a legal requirement. Land is being destroyed every day, and nowhere that I know of is the damage being restored. Lack of labour and lack of plant, careless legislation and public indifference, the demand for gold, the stimulation of dead settlements by a new flow of money—all these have combined to protect the dredges at the expense of the soil, and to explain why it is that there is not even an attempt made to put farming land back into farming condition once the gold has been taken out.

It is humbug to blame the government. The culprits are all those electors whose silence supports the crime. For it is of course not our land. Land is a

trust whoever at the moment occupies it. It can't be increased, but it can be destroyed, and if we do destroy it we are brigands and thieves.

I don't feel clean enough to blame anybody for the damage already done. But if the destruction continues I should not like to be on record as one of the country's rulers when posterity gets the bill.

* * *

A LITTLE way round the shore of Lake Kanieri I came on a notice to vandals that ran something like this:

Don't think that the damage you see here was caused by goats or deer. It was caused by donkeys who had no more sense than to mutilate the growing bush.

The damage was not very severe—half-a-dozen saplings barked and broken on the very edge of the water. I concluded that the lake had watchful guardians, and longed at once to help them

THIS MEANS YOU

But I should like to be sure that their method is good.

Direct talk, I am afraid, is like direct action—good at the right time and right place, but then not often possible. A vandal caught in the act might be influenced by a sufficiently scathing reproof; but a young fool contemplating a notice like that, in company with two or three

other young fools, since they are seldom solitary, would be more likely to add to his list, and to mix some profanity with it. I certainly saw no sign as I walked on that this had happened, though the original offence was months old, and I may be wrong in supposing that it is likely to happen. But there is not much evidence that slanging people reforms them unless they are reasonably reformable to begin with.

I don't know the cure for vandalism. We must, I think, resist the impulse to make the punishment fit the difficulty of conviction (like the punishment for sheep-stealing); but it might be worth trying to make the punishment fit the crime. If the destroyer of trees had to give up football for a few week-ends and work at forestry, and the mutilator of monuments had to report every Friday night for street-cleaning—in both cases under rigorous discipline—it is possible that they would end with a little respect for public property. Perfectionists, of course, tell us that reform must begin in the school and at home, but that is just a lazy evasion. The problem is to know what to do with those who have not been made safe in school and home—what to do with them in a country that on the physical side stimulates the desire for sensation and on the spiritual side thwarts and starves it.

(To be Continued.)



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ITEMS FROM THE ZB's

FOR the last two years the ZB stations and 2ZA have been presenting the *Hit Parade* programme on Tuesdays at 8.0 p.m. To mark its second anniversary, a contest has been arranged, with eight prizes—the first a radio set valued at £130, second a set valued at £45, third a set valued at £19/19/-, and five consolation prizes of a guinea each. Of 16 songs heard from time to time in this session during the last two years, listeners will be asked to choose eight, placing them in order of favouritism, and the competitors who place the titles in the majority order of listeners' preference will be the prize-winners. Entries close on Wednesday, August 18, and the results will be announced on Tuesday, August 31.

* * *

A NEW programme, replacing *Romance of Famous Jewels*, at 3ZB, will be *When Did This Happen?* in which the compère will present in each episode three or four dramatized scenes based on important dates in history. On occasions a clue may be supplied in the form of music and at the end of each episode the answers will be given. *When Did This Happen?* starts on Friday, August 6, at 6.30 p.m.

* * *

EDGAR WALLACE'S thriller *The Sinister Man* has replaced *The Missing Million* at 7.45 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays at 3ZB. And according to what the Christchurch station tells us, Canterbury listeners take their serials somewhat seriously, for several of them, having missed one or two episodes, have telephoned 3ZB for a synopsis of them. In fact one woman listener asked the other evening if the previous night's chapter could be played to her over the telephone.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, JULY 30

*Met her on Sunday—
Lost her on Monday!*

LATER: thanks to COLGATE

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That 'breath of trouble' has spoilt many a romance. Colgate's fresh, penetrating foam leaves your mouth clean and sweet.

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