

WILD HORSES. R. T. Batley's diary (1876) notes that tracks of horses were seen on the Motumatai Range, so wild horses seem to have been established in the upper Moawhango tussock for over 80 years. At the present day they have only been seen in small numbers, but their close-grazing pattern is evident, and over so long a period must be taken to have modified the vegetation of the upper Moawhango, perhaps considerably.

The name "Brumby Ford" on the Hinemaia River a little above the new hydro-electric dam indicates that they range on the scrub-tussock flats further up the valley, though none have actually been seen in the last ten years.

CATTLE. Wild cattle occur on the forest margin of the Hinemaia and have also been reported in the Tauranga-Taupo valley.

GOATS. Goats have recently (1956) been liberated near the Te Rei forest.

RABBITS. I do not know the history of rabbits to the north of the range, but their arrival on the Inland Patea is a curious story. In January, 1900, R. T. Batley informed the Rabbit Inspector at Waipukurau (Hawke's Bay) that rabbits had appeared across the Rangitikei River on the Mokai Patea Plateau, having apparently taken advantage of a recently cut track to gain access to the Ruahine Range. Shortly after this they spread across the river into the tussock country of the Inland Patea, where they had increased to such numbers by about 1920 that grazing leases over large areas of native land were said to have been allowed to fall in.

Mr Nicholls, of the Forest Research Institute, has called my attention to a description by B. C. Aston (1911b) of a heavy concentration of rabbits as early as 1910 on the tussock flats at the head of the Waipakihi. Although he gives evidence of exceptionally heavy damage to the vegetation and states this had reached the stage where it would have been impossible to visualize the original plant cover no suspicion of this has been aroused in botanical examinations of this basin from 1933 onwards.

Rabbiting has been steadily carried on in the tussock country since the 1920's, and only scattered pockets of rabbits have been noticed from 1930 onwards, with no indication of them over wide areas.

MICE. The widespread occurrence of mice in or near beech forest over a period of 10 months from the winter of 1955 included the Kaimanawa as well as the Ruahine and Kaweka Ranges. As this followed the heavy mast-fall of the autumn of that year it may prove to be a significant phenomenon. No previous records of forest-ranging mice are recorded for the central North Island, and it is possible that they are filling the niche formerly occupied by the native rat.

RED DEER (*Cervus elaphus*). The nearest early red deer liberations recorded are Matapiro (Hawke's Bay) in 1883, Tongariro in 1896 and 1905, and Galatea in 1897. Forbes (1924) shows "Kuripapanga-Kaimanawa Mountains" as the main area occupied by his Hawke's Bay herd, so that the Kaimanawa Ranges were presumably colonized from the eastern (Matapiro) liberation, which was incidentally the largest one (11 animals), rather than from the northern or western sides. The initial spread was rather slow, the first stag being sighted on Ngamatea station in 1903 (Masters, p. 17). By 1930 deer were abundant with well-developed track systems and forest undergrowth heavily browsed (List 14) but with dead standing *Neopanax* still conspicuous, a useful indicator of the stage of browsing pressure. The population had probably reached or passed its peak in 1930 as a traverse of the range three years later, in company with J. H. Gibbs, an experienced bushman and hunter, produced his comment that the numbers were decreasing, with tracks falling into disuse and browsed shrubs making fresh growth. However, large mobs of 40-50 were then seen browsing in the open