

REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 1971.

Arawhata River Reserve

Doctor A. F. Mark has prepared a case for a Forest Sanctuary near the Arawhata River and the Society submitted it to the New Zealand Forest Service on his behalf. The area is relatively accessible and the vegetation gradients of forest and pakihi on the poorly drained acid soils are of botanical and pedological interest.

In a reappraisal of Council's policy on such matters it was concluded that if groups wish to involve the Society, as in this case, the more efficient course is for the persons or groups who locate these desirable areas to make out the detailed case and then either submit them to the appropriate authority with a covering supporting letter from the Society, or ask that the Society submit it in its own name.

Castle Hill Basin

A proposal by Reid Development to build residential and recreational facilities in the limestone area of Castle Hill Basin has given us concern. In addition to the scenic value of the area there are a number of endemic species and unique communities as well as geological and archeological features. Doctor C. J. Burrows and Professor O'Connor have been the members most actively concerned and in keeping the Society informed.

Chatham Island Peat Wax Mining

It came to our notice in September that there were applications to mine waxes from the deep peats of the Chatham Islands. Our concern was in its possible effect on characteristic vegetation types which were being considered as possible reserves, and also possible loss of palynological records from the deep peats. A written submission along these lines was sent to the Wardens Court hearing.

Ecological Guidelines for Engineering Projects

Following a request from the New Zealand Institution of Engineers Council has been assessing the possibility of drawing up a set of guidelines of the types of ecological principles and guidelines that need to be taken into account in any engineering projects, particularly water resource engineering. Associated with this was the possibility of drawing up a list of ecologists whom engineers could consult in particular areas.

Manapouri

The Society presented its submission near the close of the Commission of Inquiry even though it was one of the first cases to be submitted. Our submission raised general questions based on ecological considerations, but its effectiveness was reduced by the delay in hearing. The Report of the Commission took note of the ecological issues though the legal considerations were paramount. The Society did not believe it could contribute any new information to the subsequent Parliamentary Subcommittee hearing.

Ultra-basic Area, Fiordland

The Massey University groups have kept us informed of their activities in describing the natural features of the Red Hills. This should aid the Society in its continued desire to get a well chosen area of this ultra-basic zone included in the Fiordland or Mount Aspiring National Park.

Other Matters

The sub-committee has also been concerned with: illegal mutton birding on Little Mangere Island, Chatham Islands; foreign ownership of land in New Zealand; re-aligning the road on Arthurs Pass summit in relation to Cockayne plots and swamp vegetation; lack of regulation on bio-degradability of detergents; and Lindis Pass and Waiouru tussock reserve.

D. SCOTT, Convener.