

Clumps of Phormium tenax were observed along the cliff tops of the north coast.

At the time of the visit the gannets were on their eggs, but already a good many had hatched. A single young grey-faced petrel was found in its burrow at the Chauora camp site. On the bouldery shore of Crater Bay itself, there is a colony of nesting red-billed gulls. A single sterling was seen at the Otaketake gannetry.

Apparently the kiore, or Maori rat, is on the island, but none were observed. Of other forms of life, a spider and an earwig were seen amongst the old timber of the factory, flies of various types were present, and on pohutukawa was found the cicada, Melampsalta sericea.

That, briefly, is White Island. An unexciting flora and vegetation, interesting bird-life, and altogether one of New Zealand's most remarkable off-shore islands.

M.D. Wilcox.

x "White Island". D.S.I.R. Bulletin No.127, 1959, by W.H.Hamilton and I.L.Baumgart.

#### CONSERVATION AT THE CROSSROADS.

On Saturday, May 14th., 1966, the N.Z. Nature Protection Council, through the medium of its sponsoring body, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, convened a meeting of its member societies and associated bodies to discuss aspects of Conservation which had been brought to a head as a result of recent Government actions in respect of certain national assets for which, it was widely felt, the Nature Conservation Council was not performing its intended functions in a wholly satisfactory manner. Some fifteen societies were represented, including the Auckland Botanical Society which was represented by the undersigned. In addition a number of observers attended, mostly representing Government Departments.

Topics for discussion on the agenda were:

#### 1. National Parks.

Discussion centered around the inviolate nature of National Parks and the desirability of:

- (a) requiring submission of all proposed encroachments to be heard by public commission.
- (b) the Authority being responsible directly to Parliament
- and (c) the legitimate uses of Parks.

#### 2. Scenic Reserves.

The greater vulnerability of these was discussed and the need therefore for an "alert and vital public", and due public notice of changes of status proposed.

#### 3. State Forest Parks.

The need for a mandatory Advisory Committee rather than the present optional provision for such was emphasized. The present policy of "comprehensive stocktaking" was discussed, and also the need for greater publicity.

#### 4. Nature Conservation Council.

From a discussion on the origin and function of the Council, the following emerged :

- (a) The Council itself is not satisfied with its limitations.
- (b) The constitution of the Council must be strengthened by highly qualified persons.
- (c) Members should, in some measure, be appointed by organisations with legitimate interests in Conservation.
- (d) The Chairman should be appointed by the Council, and should not be a public servant.
- (e) The Council should be responsible directly to Parliament.
- (f) The resources ( staff, finance, facilities, information, etc.) of State departments should be freely available to the Council.

A committee of seven was elected to implement resolutions embodying these points by submitting them to the appropriate authority.

#### 5. National Parks Authority.

It was recommended that the Authority be increased by one member such that there be two representatives of the National Parks Boards, one each from North and South Islands. Also that the annual grant to the Authority be increased both for urgent capital development and control of noxious organisms.

#### 6. Soil Conservation and Rivers Control.

Amendments were recommended to give consideration to wild-life in the planning of major works.

#### 7. National Sea Shores.

The committee was directed to consider the urgent need for the provision of sea-shore reserves on a national basis, and to make representations to Government.

#### 8. Litter.

The committee was asked to consider an anti-litter campaign financed from Golden Kiwi funds.

The committee has since met and discussed with Government officials the matters outlined above. It is understood that Government is sympathetic and anxious to improve matters, but no positive action appears to have been taken as yet.

J.A. Rattenbury