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Mr. Corbett Opens Pukeiti Lodge

LARGE CROWD TRAVELS TO THE RANGES

ERECTED at a cost of over £4000, the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust's lodge, situated on the trust's property on Carrington Road, 16 miles from New Plymouth, was officially opened this afternoon by the Minister of Lands, Mr. Corbett. Well over 500 people attended the opening in perfect weather.

Eight buses were engaged to transport the public to the lodge and a large number of private cars helped to swell the numbers that visited the property. After the opening ceremony the property was thrown open to the public for inspection.

The trust board's chairman, Mr. G. W. Williams, Hawera, introduced Mr. Corbett and read out a letter received from the present patron of the trust, Mr. W. D. Cook, Gisborne, who purchased the property and offered it to a society of at least 20 people who would subscribe to its planting and maintenance. That was in 1950, and the area was 153 acres. An anonymous donation of 163 acres later brought the property to over 300 acres.

Mr. Cook is now on his way back to New Zealand after a trip to England. Writing from England, he expressed his regret that he could not be at the opening of the lodge.

"GREAT VENTURE"

He expressed his extreme pleasure, not only with the steady progress made since the official opening of the property but with the magnificent and generous voluntary help and donations, which showed a fine spirit of co-operation and faith in the future of the great venture.

"Personally, I feel now, more than ever, since seeing gardens in Britain and Europe, that the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust will create the finest rhododendron park in the world," he wrote. "We must always aim at having the best forms of everything and giving space for mature development of each plant or group. Most of the mistakes I have seen in Britain, even in the gardens of the experts are from overcrowding."

"We have space at Pukeiti to build the loveliest garden in the world, and I have faith that we will. With our natural setting of native forest we have a background I have nowhere seen equalled."

Mr. Cook said that he had found constructive and friendly support in Britain among the keenest horticulturists. The trust's British membership showed that, he said, and also their desire to come and see Pukeiti for themselves. The Royal Horticultural Society had promised their fullest support.

In conclusion Mr. Cook made an appeal to members to give to Pukeiti bits of the rarest and best in their gardens and to bring in as members those in New Zealand who are the keenest in horticulture.

Letter From Earl of Glasgow

A letter from the Earl of Glasgow wishing the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust all success and expressing the wish that it was not so far away, was received by the trust board when it held a meeting in New Plymouth today. The Earl is a member of the trust.

"Many of us over here are interested in gardens with rhododendron and azalea layouts," the letter stated. "I can imagine few more suitable places for such gardens than a tract of New Zealand bush. Already beautiful with your wonderful native flora, that beauty can be enhanced if interspersed with rare rhododendrons."

LETTERS

SPEEDING

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—Judging by the speed of some of the taxis in New Plymouth it would

PUKEITI TRUST FINANCES SUCCESSFUL YEAR REVIEWED

Since its foundation in 1951 to promote interest on a national basis in the culture of rhododendrons and associated purposes, the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust has received a total of £8270 and has spent £7735 of that amount, the major portion—£4189—being for the lodge which was officially opened this afternoon.

The trust's property of 300-odd acres is situated in the Kaitake Ranges close to Mount Egmont and is 16 miles from New Plymouth.

Though such an amount had been spent on the lodge, the trust's chairman, Mr. G. W. Williams, Hawera, stated at today's meeting of the trust board in New Plymouth that nobody had made a profit. Everything had been contributed at cost. In thanking all those who had helped he said they were creating something for posterity at their own cost. It was an attempt to make New Zealand beautiful, he added.

The trust now has a balance in hand of £535, it was reported to the board today, but there are 198 subscriptions, totalling £943, outstanding.

100 NEW MEMBERS

It was also reported that at the floral festival held in New Plymouth this week 100 new members had been enrolled for the trust and just over £170 had been realised from films shown at the festival.

Mr. Williams stated that the trust had enjoyed a very successful year. A wonderful job had been made with the new lodge. Though the trust had just about spent all its money it now had a fine building.

"I think we were somewhat hesitant about the venture at first but there is no doubt now that it is a success," he said.

Mr. Russell Mathewy (New Plymouth) commented that he had visualised that it would take 10 to 20 years to reach the position the trust was now in.

It was a credit to the Taranaki people the way they had pulled together, said Mr. R. K. Ireland (Oamaru).

The possibility of making a small lake on the trust's property, with a road around it and surrounded by rhododendrons was suggested by Mr. Williams and members considered this a good idea.

It was emphasised at this point that the trust was not destroying native bush on its property. Its intention was to preserve and improve the bush on the property by adding other species.

Mr. M. G. Maxwell (Rahotu) said the setting aside of about 10 acres for the propagation of a wide range of native flora would be a unique feature in New Zealand.

The secretary, Mr. G. J. Broker, announced that an agreement had been arrived at with the Minister of Lands, Mr. Corbett, that while the trust's property would be constituted as a private scenic reserve the trust would have the power to do what a lot of other private scenic reserve owners could not do. It would give the trust a measure of authority, he said.

He added that the trust would soon have to take steps to have wardens appointed to prevent fires being lit and plants being taken away.

still ignore the intersection stop signs.—