

of this kind, is placed on life history and habits rather than systematics. Many fascinating adaptations such as the ability of spiny-tailed geckos to squirt a sticky fluid from the skin of the tail at their enemies, and the remarkable way in which some of the flap-footed lizards (Pygopodidae) mimic snakes are described from first-hand observation.

Final chapters deal with the problem of conservation, which is particularly urgent in the case of some of the bigger species, such as the seven-foot perentie monitor of the desert regions; with profitable areas for future research, and with the care of lizards in captivity. There are excellent photographs, many in colour, and some attractive line drawings. The bibliography is useful, though a few important recent papers dealing with temperature regulations are omitted.

This valuable and clearly written book has a tremendous amount of up-to-date information in a short space. It will be much appreciated, not only in Australia, but by people who are interested in lizards all over the world.

A. d'A. BELLAIRS

Man against Nature, by R. M. Lockley. Deutsch £3 15.

Ao-tea-roa, the land of the long white cloud, as New Zealand was called by the colonising Maori, has found an enthusiastic though critical advocate in Ronald Lockley. But his book, although a 'Survival Special on New Zealand', is rather a description of the country from a naturalist's, farmer's and historical point of view, with a strong plea for preservation, than the balanced appreciation of the conservation situation for which the title leads one to hope. Moreover, his description of the coming of the Maori includes happenings and dates that are legendary, even mythical, and his tale would have lost nothing if he had made clear the speculative nature of its historical part.

Turning to the effect which the European settler has had on the environment, he describes the destruction of the indigenous forests, the terrible overgrazing, the replacement of native birds by European species, and, above all, the introduction, much of it deliberate, of foreign plants and wild mammals, especially deer and the opossum. But I wish that he had also discussed other major aspects of 'Man against Nature', such as mining, which, had it proved commercially profitable, would surely have destroyed Coppermine Island in spite of the conservationists' efforts; the demand for power, which still threatens the beauty of Lake Manapuri; and development, from which the supreme effort, mostly of one woman, has partially saved Farewell Spit.

The book's great value, however, lies in the author's plea that New Zealand should pause awhile in her rush for commercialisation and adopt a stronger conservation policy; that she should realize that 'in a world on the verge of starvation her fortune is to be a well-fed nation, with abundant farm and forest produce and unlimited fish as her main asset, and that these are the country's real hope of maintaining her present high standard of life'.

This is a good book, well illustrated. May it be used to convince those who demand unlimited industrial expansion and those who follow the 'she'll be right' expression of some New Zealanders, that the path of unlimited exploitation leads but to desolation.

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