

## NOTES BY DR. L. COCKayne.

*Wilton's Bush (Wellington).*

The object of such a reserve as Wilton's Bush is twofold. It serves to conserve one of the last pieces of that forest which formerly quite covered the hills near Wellington, and it brings the special forest scenery of New Zealand with its diverse attractions within easy reach of the city dweller. Both these purposes are excellently fulfilled. With regard to the first-named, the main gully is quite in its primeval condition. It contains a considerable number of fine rimu trees. The lianes and tree-ferns which give the especial character to a New Zealand forest are there in quantity. Also there are probably still somewhere or other in the reserve examples of all the species which were to be originally found in a Wellington forest.

The fire which occurred during the abnormally dry summer spoilt in some measure the general appearance of the forest as seen from the approach, but time will heal the damage, and the interesting gully referred to is absolutely intact. The most important desideratum is the cutting of tracks through the forest, as such, if designed with care, serve above all else to maintain a reserve in its natural state and at the same time enable it to be enjoyed and made use of.

*The Silverstream Reserve.*

This reserve is situated for the most part on a very steep hillside. It is by no means specially picturesque, its chief importance consisting in the fact that it represents and preserves in some measure a piece of the former forest (now destroyed) of the western side of the Hutt Valley. The reserve contains probably rather more than 100 species of flowering plants and ferns. Without the forest, too, are some interesting plants, especially a narrow-leaved form of *Veronica cataractae* and the beautiful eyebright *Euphrasia cuneata*. There is one pretty gully, and this is specially remarkable for its wealth of fine leafy liverworts. The view of the bush from without is marred by the willows which are planted along the bank of the river. These have been put there for the purpose of preserving the bank, but they could be cut down quite short without in the least interfering with this function, while at the same time the general appearance of the reserve would be improved.

## APPENDIX C.

## REPORT OF THE SCENERY PRESERVATION BOARD.

CONSIDERATION of the various matters referred to the Board by the Minister of Lands under the provisions of "The Scenery Preservation Amendment Act, 1906," occupied the attention of the Board during the past year. In every case careful inspections were made of the area so suggested, and wherever possible individual members of the Board themselves specially visited the lands. In other cases the services of the Crown Lands Rangers or staff surveyors were availed of, and on receipt of their reports and plans the Board considered their recommendations, and in most cases, through its previous knowledge of the locality, was enabled to deal with the matter without delay. Meetings of the Board were held as follows: Auckland Board, at Auckland, on the 17th February, 1908; Taranaki Board, at Auckland, on the 17th February, 1908; Wellington Board, at Wellington, on the 20th June, 1907, and the 13th July, 1907; Nelson Board, at Wellington, on the 18th June, 1907; Canterbury Board, at Wellington, on the 21st October, 1907.

The accompanying schedule shows the various recommendations that have from time to time been submitted by the Board, and the action taken thereon. Several urgent cases of acquisition of private and Native lands have been authorised by the Government, and in other cases, as the land was not being dealt with by the owners in any manner, action was deferred until there was a probability of the land being injuriously affected in any way. Such a course was rendered advisable by the great prevalence of bush-fires during the past summer, and the danger that a scenic area might immediately after purchase be quite robbed of its beauties by the sweep of a bush-fire over its forest. Where practicable, all cases needing early action were dealt with in accordance with the recommendations of the Board.

As there is at present no power to acquire Native lands for scenic purposes under the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Acts, the Board has not dealt with several areas of Maori lands which are worthy of permanent reservation, but as far as possible has considered and reported on all other classes of land coming under its jurisdiction. At the present time no very large tract of country requires special consideration, but in the majority of cases scenic reserves are required to be made in areas of Crown or Native land hitherto unoccupied and now about to be surveyed and subdivided for settlement purposes, or in localities where suitable areas have hitherto been preserved by private persons, and there is a danger of the timber thereon being felled and removed for milling purposes.

However, it is pleasing to report that the various officers of the Department of Lands and Survey endeavour to assist in the preservation of scenery as much as is in their power, whilst valuable suggestions and assistance have been given by private persons who take an interest in the matter. Among them is Mr. C. E. Street, of Taranaki, who through the Taranaki Scenery Preservation Society (a private society) offered to the Government an area of 25 perches as an historic reserve, free of cost. This offer was gratefully accepted, and the land will shortly be proclaimed under the Act.

Particulars of the recommendations of the late Scenery Preservation Commissioners regarding the Wanganui River, as amended by the Board and Under-Secretary of Lands, appear as an appendix to this report, and show what is necessary to be done to adequately preserve the scenery on the banks of the river. Last year's report contained similar information regarding the North Island Main Trunk Railway line.

It will thus be seen that the most pressing matters have now been attended to, and that the work of scenery-preservation is progressing very satisfactorily in New Zealand.

THOS. HUMPHRIES,

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