

The chain of reserves around Lake Rotoroa, Nelson District, was completed by the reservation of two Crown sections comprising 108 acres. The total area reserved on the shores of the lake is now over 5,200 acres.

In the Marlborough Land District two small portions of the river-bank road in the Rai Valley were declared closed by special legislation and made subject to the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Act. These particular areas are covered with very fair native bush, and are situated on a portion of the road reserve not required for traffic. An interesting reservation in this district during the year was that of the Isolated Hill Reserve of 4,260 acres in Wherside Survey District. This area comprises extremely precipitous country of great scenic beauty and rich in native-bird life, and will form a valuable addition to the national reserves of the Dominion.

Three small sections on the Purakaunui Stream, Otago District, were set apart on account of their scenic beauty. They are covered with a fair amount of mixed bush, and there is an attractive series of waterfalls on the Purakaunui much visited by holiday-makers.

The reservation over four small scenic reserves was revoked during the year. These were cases of small areas in isolated localities where the bush had been destroyed and replanting was not considered advisable. In addition the reservation over portions of five other reserves was revoked for various reasons. The total number of scenic reservations in existence now stands at 758, comprising an area of over 450,000 acres, and covering an extremely wide range of the most beautiful bush, river, lake, and mountain scenery that the hand of Nature has so lavishly provided throughout the boundaries of the Dominion. Much work, however, still remains to be accomplished, and the Department is fully aware of the necessity of setting aside further areas of Crown land of scenic beauty, and of the acquisition, where possible and desirable, of suitable privately owned lands.

#### SUPERVISION OF RESERVES.

During the year local Scenic Boards were appointed or reappointed as follows: The Everett Road Scenic Board, to control the Everett Road Reserves; Levin Borough Council, to control the Waiopahu Reserve; Whangarei Borough Council, to control the Coronation Reserve; Invercargill Borough Council, to control the Waihopai River Reserve; Orari Gorge Scenic Board, to control the Orari Gorge Reserve; Lake Rotoiti Scenic Board, to control the Lake Rotoiti Reserves; Huatoki Scenic Board, to control the Huatoki Reserve; and the Summit Road Scenic Reserves Board, to control the Summit Road Reserves.

Messrs. H. V. Mathias and P. H. E. Surrey were appointed honorary Inspectors under the Act for the Pororari River-bank and Pukerangiora Pa Reserves respectively. The Department has now obtained the services of a considerable number of enthusiasts throughout the Dominion as honorary Inspectors, and the work carried out by these gentlemen in safeguarding the various reserves is of great value and assistance. In 1922 the forest rangers of the State Forest Service were appointed as Inspectors, and during the year under review these appointments were brought up to date consequent upon staff changes, &c. The forest rangers are often on duty in remote localities, and have been able to furnish valuable assistance in reporting on the more distant reserves, &c. It was also found possible during the year to arrange for inspections by our own officers of all the scenic reserves in several land districts, and it is hoped that in the future these inspections will be carried out more frequently still by our field officers. During recent years, owing to the great pressure of soldier settlement, it has not been possible for this branch of the Department's field work to receive as much attention as was altogether desirable, but an improvement in this respect can now be looked for.

#### DAMAGE TO RESERVES, AND TRESPASS THEREON.

The inspections carried out during the year have shown that the bulk of the reserves are in good order and condition. Several cases of wanton destruction and gross carelessness have, however, been reported, and, unfortunately, in some country districts the Department has had to contend with a good deal of apathy and indifference on the part of the residents. As against this dark picture it must be said that evidence is not wanting to show that public opinion is inclining more and more favourably towards the preservation of natural beauty.

A particularly glaring case of destruction occurred on the Northcote Scenic Reserve, Auckland, where over fifty lance-wood trees were felled and sold for gain. The offender was convicted, and a fine of £50 inflicted. It is hoped that the publicity given to this particular case will prove beneficial in notifying the public of the necessity of treating our scenic areas with the respect they deserve. A conviction was also obtained in a case of illegal removal of firewood from a scenic reserve, and it is the intention of the Department to prosecute wherever possible in such cases, and also in cases of stock trespass.

#### APPENDICES.

Attached to this report are the following appendices:—

- A. Schedule of reserves made during the year, accompanied by statements of expenditure.
- B. Report of the Scenery Preservation Board.
- C. Marlborough Scenic Reserves.
- D. North Auckland Scenic Reserves.
- E. Kapiti Island.