

the big scenic reserve extending to the top of the St. Arnaud Range, but owing to the efforts of the Public Works Department and the Forest Service the fire was confined to freehold land and no serious damage was done to the scenic reserve. A second fire swept about 1,500 acres of scenic reserve near the Gowan Bridge. This area was principally fern spurs which were coming back into second growth, also about 100 acres of green bush. This fire burnt for some days, and was extinguished with great difficulty.

Fortunately no serious damage by fire was caused to the principal scenic reserves on the main highways, but the position in midsummer was serious and was viewed with apprehension. Considerable assistance was given by the State Forest Service in subduing fires in various localities which threatened to spread into scenic reserves.

A few other fires occurred in various districts, but fortunately the damage done in most cases was not extensive.

GENERAL.

The reservation of further areas of Crown lands, and the acquisition of privately owned lands of scenic and historic interest, are being carried out as opportunity permits. In this connection it may be pointed out that the expenditure on scenery-preservation for the year ended 31st March, 1928, was £6,599, while from 1904 to that date the total expenditure amounted to £196,205. The expenditure fluctuates considerably from year to year, and activity in the direction of acquiring new areas is governed to a large extent by the funds made available to the Department for the work. By the Scenery Preservation Amendment Act, 1926, local authorities were empowered to contribute towards the cost of the acquisition by the Crown of land for scenic purposes, and towards the cost of improvement or maintenance of any scenic reserve, and it is hoped that by enlisting the sympathies of City, Borough, and County Councils, &c., in this matter it will be possible to aid materially the cause of scenery-preservation.

The public are taking a much keener interest in our scenic reserves than was formerly the case, the largely increased use of private motor-cars rendering it possible for many people to visit areas well away from the main centres of population. The increased use that is now being made of many reserves has brought with it additional responsibilities and difficulties in connection with control and management; but it is pleasing to record that visitors generally appear to appreciate the fact that the welfare of the reserves rests largely in their hands, and that it is incumbent on them to assist in the preservation of the bush. It has been found necessary in some cases to issue permits to camp on certain reserves under reasonable conditions; but it is not proposed to allow camping except on reserves adapted for the purpose, and then only under proper safeguarding conditions.

The illustrations of scenes in Westland are reproduced from photographs kindly lent by Dr. E. Teichelmann and Mr. Peter Graham.

APPENDICES.

Attached to this report are the following appendices.

- A. Schedule of reserves made and reservations revoked during the year, accompanied by statement of expenditure.
- B. Report of the Scenery Preservation Board.
- C. Kapiti Island.
- D. Report of the New Plymouth Scenic Reserves Board.
- E. Marlborough Scenic Reserves.
- F. Canterbury Scenic Reserves.