

Of the reserves coming directly under the control of this Department, the principal ones in South Canterbury are Reserve 3724, at Raincliff; Reserves 3812 and 3813, in the Four Peaks district; and Reserve 3242, in the Nimrod district.

Mr. O. G. Parr is the honorary inspector of Reserve 3724, which comprises 62 acres of mixed bush, mostly broadleaf and smaller trees, although some good totara and pines are interspersed. It is a popular reserve, and is much frequented in summer months by picnic parties. The bush is in a good state of preservation.

The Four Peaks reserves (Nos. 3812 and 3813), of 147 acres, are situated on the steep slopes fronting the Waihi River opposite the traffic road and ten miles from Geraldine. As the river separates the reserve from the road, this reserve is not used to any great extent by picnic parties. The bush here is in a fairly good state of preservation.

Reserve 3242, in Nimrod Survey District, of 270 acres, is one of the few remnants of bush preserved in this area of South Canterbury. It was originally set aside for the preservation of native fauna and flora, and, being rough and inaccessible, is well adapted for the preservation of native bird-life.

Adjoining this reserve are four areas, comprising 154 acres, which form portion of the Rosewill Settlement, and which were withheld from selection and have been lying idle for many years. The areas are settlement land, and, due to the need for conserving scenery-preservation funds, the question of the declaration of these areas as scenic reserves has been held up for the past seven years. It is hoped in the near future that provision can be made to finalize this matter and declare these areas scenic reserves. Of the area 50 acres are covered with good mixed bush, which many years ago was partly milled, and the balance of 104 acres is very broken and rocky, covered with lighter bush and scrub.

In Mid-Canterbury the better-known reserves are those of Pudding Hill and Sharplin Falls. The Pudding Hill Reserve (Reserve 3825; area, 82 acres) is situated on the north branch of the Ashburton River, seven miles from Methven. It is of good scenic value, and although the area is north of the rain-forest line on this eastern coast, and the bush is mostly birch, yet it contains a few small kahikatea, together with an extensive variety of native shrubs. It has recently suffered erosion from the river, but most of the bush is on a high solid terrace and naturally protected from any stream erosion.

Sharplin Falls (Reserve 3785), in the Alford District; area, 160 acres: This reserve lies under Mount Somers and Mount Winterslow, and is distant ten miles from Methven. This reserve, together with the Alford Forest region generally, is particularly rich in scenic quality, and many people journey to the district from all parts of the province. A track has recently been cut through this reserve to the falls, making the trip practicable for the ordinary visitor.

Adjoining this reserve is the Wairere Settlement, which was opened in 1919. Section 8 thereof (298 acres), being covered with birch bush, was withheld from settlement, but no further action was taken. Recently a portion of Section 5 of this settlement, also bush-covered (64 acres) was excluded from the section, and the two areas, comprising 362 acres, were by *Gazette*, in February, 1930, brought under the Scenery Preservation Act. The area is steep and broken, covered with birch bush, and makes a valuable addition to the Sharplin Falls Reserve, which it adjoins. The area is in a fairly good state of preservation, but deer have come down into this country and unless drastic steps are taken to cope with this menace natural regeneration will be imperilled.

On the Banks Peninsula are many reserves other than those vested in the Summit Road bodies. At Peraki, west of Akaroa Peninsula, a number of these reserves were of no value for scenic purposes, being covered with manuka or light scrubby bush. They were, moreover, inaccessible by road, and I am pleased to record that negotiations with Commander S. Hall have now been completed whereby several of these areas have been exchanged for an area of 35 acres of good mixed bush. The area acquired is one of the finest stands of mixed bush in Canterbury, is in a good state of preservation, and, moreover, has excellent road access. Together with an existing scenic reserve of 49 acres which adjoins, it forms a very valuable area, and is one of the finest reserves on the Peninsula. In the vicinity of Peraki and Akaroa are a number of other reserves, totalling in area 419 acres, of which 321 acres are bush-covered. These reserves are all well off the beaten track.

In North Canterbury there are few scenic reserves. Reserve 3538—area, 137 acres—lies at the foot of Mount Grey, and consists of tussocky spurs with the gullies covered with light birch bush. It is, however, fairly frequently visited by picnickers, and recently a few acres in scrub and tussock were burnt. No damage, however, was done to the bush. The reserve is twelve miles from Amberley.

At present steps are being taken to proclaim as an historic reserve an area in the Weka Pass which contains an example of early Maori, or possibly Moriori, rock paintings. Before this cave was visited by Europeans it contained one of the most interesting collections of rock-paintings in New Zealand, and therefore is well worth restoring and preserving. The height of the shelter at its entrance is 9 ft., and the back wall, which slopes inwards, is about 6 ft. The rock is a very closely granulated limestone, which wears very slowly and takes a polish. The back wall of the shelter to a height of 6 ft. and a length of 66 ft. is covered in paintings. They represent grotesque forms of animals and men, the figures being some 2 ft. or 3 ft. in height, having been executed with an oil paint, possibly made from the black and red pigments mixed in bird-oil as commonly used by the Maori. The figures are now somewhat obliterated through the action of weathering, fungoid growth, and also by a limited amount of damage by rubbing by stock and scribbling by picnic parties. It is hoped to have a fence erected which will protect the shelter from stock, and also to have the figures repainted and restored while they are still decipherable. There are in South Canterbury, in the Raincliff and Cave districts some further examples of these paintings, and also at Cave some examples of early rock-carvings. The paintings at Raincliff are more extensive and in better preservation than those at Weka Pass, and are in consequence of great ethnological interest.