

Other reservations in this land district included areas of 82 acres of native bush situated at Pudding Hill on the Ashburton River; 100 acres in the Four Peaks Settlement; and 268 acres on the Whiterock River. This last was set aside in 1898 for the preservation of native fauna and flora, but it was considered desirable to bring it under the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Act.

In the Southland Land District the only reservation during the year consisted of an area of 141 acres of forest land in the Titiroa district fully representative of the native forest found on the better class land in Southland. The area is admirably adapted to scenic purposes, situated as it is in a district in which reserves of this nature are comparatively few.

Revocations of scenic reservations over areas totalling 471 acres have been arranged for various purposes. Full investigations were made in each case before the issue of the revoking Proclamations.

Approximately 603 acres have been taken in connection with the construction of the Midland Railway line in the Westland Land District, while 3 roods 24 perches of Reserve 1369 in the Waiho Survey District were taken for road purposes.

The number of scenic reservations in the Dominion is now 897, covering a total area of 653,435 acres.

SCENERY PRESERVATION BOARD.

Meetings of the Scenery Preservation Board were held in the office of the Surveyor-General, Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington on the 1st April, 1931 (North Auckland, Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Marlborough, Canterbury, and Southland Districts); on the 17th December, 1931 (North Auckland, Auckland, Taranaki, Wellington, Nelson, Marlborough, Canterbury, and Southland Districts), and on the 1st March, 1932 (Auckland, Wellington, and Nelson Districts).

Thirty-one recommendations were submitted by the Board to His Excellency the Governor-General for the acquisition and reservation of areas of scenic and historic interest throughout the Dominion under the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Act.

SUPERVISION OF RESERVES.

During the year special scenic Boards were appointed or reappointed as follows: Southland Electric-power Board, to control the Lake Monowai Scenic Reserve; Hutt County Council, to control the Silverstream Scenic Reserve; Northcote County Council, to control the Northcote Scenic Reserve; Dunedin City Council, to control the Evansdale Glen Scenic Reserve; Nelson City Council, to control the Ururakau and Dun Mountain Scenic Reserves; Taumarunui Borough Council, to control the Bush Scenic Reserve; Birkenhead Borough Council, to control the Birkenhead Scenic Reserve; and the Ruapekapeka Pa and Mount Balloon Hut Scenic Boards to control their respective reserves.

Two Warrants were issued placing additional areas under the control of the Hundalee and Hae Hae te Moana Scenic Reserves Boards respectively.

During the year fifty-three ladies and gentlemen were appointed honorary inspectors for scenic reserves throughout the Dominion, and a certificate of appointment was issued in each case. The New Zealand Institute of Horticulture and the New Zealand Forestry League, Inc., have been extremely helpful to the Department in the selection of suitable inspectors, and their services in this direction are very gratifying and greatly appreciated.

A Warrant was issued revoking the existing control of the Pukaahu Hot Springs Scenic Reserve and vesting the control in the Whakatane County Council. This matter was arranged to meet the wishes of the members of the previous Board and of the local body. The appointment of the local body was made in May, 1931, and, in the following November, the conditions of control were amended so as to allow the County Council to make special by-laws regulating the use of the springs and fixing charges for the use thereof. Such by-laws are not to come into operation until they have been approved by the Minister.

The setting-aside of three areas, totalling 18 acres, for camping purposes in the Ranfurly Bay Scenic Reserve on the Whangaroa Harbour was approved during the year. The reserve in question is a popular camping-ground and picnic place for local residents and tourists visiting the district during the summer months. The reservation, covering an area of 706 acres, is situated on the arm forming the North Head of the entrance to Whangaroa Harbour, and is in close proximity to excellent fishing-grounds and tramping-routes. Control of the reserve is vested in the Whangaroa County Council, which has, in accordance with the powers conferred under its Warrant of appointment, instituted a set of reasonable rules and charges for the use of the camping-sites mentioned herein.

GENERAL CONDITION OF RESERVES, ETC.

Reports received from field officers of the Department, Scenic Boards, and honorary inspectors show that the bulk of our scenic reserves are in good order and condition. The growth of motor transport has greatly increased the attention paid by the public to scenic areas adjacent to highways, and it is perhaps inevitable that some unauthorized camping should take place, and that a few cases of vandalism should be reported. It is fairly evident, however, that the aims and objects of scenery-preservation are becoming more widely appreciated, and that the great force of public opinion is definitely in favour of preserving intact the beauty spots of the Dominion.

The work of cutting out kauri-trees, which were unfortunately destroyed by fire in the Trounson Kauri Park in February, 1931, has been completed, and every care is being taken to prevent the possibility of similar damage. Existing fire-breaks are being improved, and additional ones provided where necessary.

Several fires occurred in reserves in the Marlborough Sounds during the abnormally dry summer. Two of these fires were caused through heavy winds carrying flames from adjoining farms during burning-off operations, but the others appear to have either been lit deliberately or to have occurred through picnic parties neglecting to take proper precautions. The areas burnt over were fortunately only small, and it is hoped that the natural vegetation will soon heal the scars.