

Section 15 of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922, provides, *inter alia*, that every person is liable to a fine of fifty pounds (£50) who, without being authorized by the Board, "wilfully breaks, cuts, injures, or removes any, or any part of any, wood, tree, shrub, fern, plant, stone, mineral, furniture, utensil, tool, or thing of any kind."

As a matter of general policy, the Board will not grant permits to remove plants from any portion of the park. So far as is at present known, there is no plant peculiar to the park, and all plants that occur there can be found outside its boundaries in the adjacent mountains, swamps, or forests.

#### OHAKUNE MOUNTAIN HUT AND TRACK.

Mr. T. A. Blyth, of Ohakune, reports that the number of visitors to the Ohakune Mountain Hut during the year shows a slight falling-off. Ordinary repairs have been carried out to the track, and the same is in good condition.

At a meeting of the Board held on the 18th March, 1932, a by-law was passed fixing a charge of 2s. for each horse traversing this track.

#### WARDEN'S REPORT.

Mr. John Cullen, I.S.O., Warden of the Park, in his annual report remarks as follows:—

"The marked decrease in native bird-life still continues, and will do so as long as stoats, weazels, wild cats, and sparrow-hawks are allowed to increase. Cats in the wild are really more destructive of bird-life than either stoats and weazels. Cats climb the trees and destroy the young in the nests and also stalk the ground-nesting birds and their young. Sparrow-hawks kill pigeons, kakas, tuis, and bell-birds, as well as the smaller birds. Some years ago Californian quail were plentiful in the park, but now there are scarcely any to be seen there.

"A portion of the dressed stone wall at the western approach to the Whakapapanui Bridge has been damaged by vandals who levered off about three yards of the heavy coping stones as well as the course of heavy dressed stone immediately underneath the coping-stones, leaving all the stones lying in the water-channel. The coping-stones are so large that it will take two men to lift them back into position.

"There are four of these dressed stone walls, two at each end of the bridge. The stones were dressed by prison labour, the intention being to erect a stone arch over the Whakapapanui River, but on this scheme being abandoned the stones were used in erecting protecting-walls and were set in with cement mortar. The stones were levered off with tools found in the Prison Scoria-pit right alongside."

#### MEETINGS AND CHANGES IN PERSONNEL OF BOARD, ETC.

On his retirement from the Public Service at the end of April, 1931, Mr. J. B. Thompson, C.B.E. (late Under-Secretary for Lands) relinquished his position as Chairman and member of the Board, a position which he had occupied from 1922. In September last Mr. Thompson was reappointed as a member of the Board to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. F. F. Hoekly.

On the 11th June, 1931, Mr. W. Robertson, Under-Secretary for Lands, was appointed Chairman of the Board by His Excellency the Governor-General, pursuant to section 7 of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922.

Mr. E. Phillips Turner, who was a member of the Board by virtue of his position as Secretary of Forestry, retired from the Public Service on the 31st March, 1931, and his seat on the Board was filled upon the appointment of Mr. A. D. McGavock as permanent head of the State Forest Service.

Mr. B. C. Aston was re-elected for a term of three years as the representative of the New Zealand Institute on the Board.

The Financial Adviser to the Government (represented at Board meetings by Mr. G. C. Rodda, Assistant Secretary to the Treasury) ceased to be a member of the Board upon the redemption of the loan from the Public Trustee, following on the taking-over of the Chateau by the Government. The Financial Adviser to the Government was a member of the Board by virtue of the provisions of section 29 of the Finance Act, 1929.

The present term of office of the nominated members of the Board will expire on the 16th January, 1935.

Five meetings of the Board were held during the year—viz., 27th April, 1931 (at the Chateau), and 21st July, 1931, 18th August, 1931, 11th December, 1931, and 18th March, 1932 (at Wellington).

Statutory provision was made in section 20 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1931, to enable the Board from time to time to appoint standing or special committees of two or more persons (being members of the Board) and to delegate to any such committee any of the powers and duties of the Board. Any committee so appointed is, however, subject in all things to the control of the Board, and is required to carry out all directions of a general or special nature given in relation to such committee or its affairs.

This power will considerably aid the Board in carrying out the details of administration connected with the management of the park.

#### FINANCE, ETC.

On entering into possession at the Chateau on the 20th February, 1931, the Board's funds amounted to £1,665 5s. 3d., and during the period of management receipts totalling £15,264 17s. 3d., inclusive of a grant of £4,000 from the Government, were lodged to the Board's bank accounts. Practically the whole amount of £16,930 2s. 6d. was disbursed in meeting the working-expenses of the Chateau, with the result that at the 31st March, 1932, the funds standing to the credit of the Board amounted to £715 16s. 6d., against which there were commitments of £348 11s. 2d. It will thus be seen that the funds of the Board are practically exhausted, and it will not be possible to carry out any further development-work at the present time.