

Scenic Reserve; Raetihi Borough Council, to control the Raetihi Scenic Reserves; Rangitikei County Council, to control the Silverhope and Rangiwaea Scenic Reserves; Upper Hutt Borough Council, to control the Upper Hutt Blockhouse; Dunedin City Council, to control the Signal Hill Scenic Reserve; Edendale Town Board, to control the Edendale Scenic Reserve; and the Parr's Park, Lake Okataina, Katikati Hot Springs, Pelorus Bridge, Orari Gorge, and Tuatapere Scenic Boards, to control their respective reserves. The New Plymouth Scenic Reserves Board was reappointed to control the Pukemiro, Onairo River, Ratapihipihi, Puketi Pa, Pukerangiora Pa, Meeting-of-the-waters, Okoki Pa, Awa-te-take, and Te Koru Pa Scenic Reserves. Two Warrants were issued placing additional areas under the control of the Hundalee Scenic Reserves Board.

During the year thirty-one 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, the New Zealand Native Bird Protection Society, and the New Zealand Forestry League, Inc., have continued to assist the Department by the nomination of suitable ladies and gentlemen who are keen to assist in the national work of scenery preservation.

#### GENERAL CONDITION OF RESERVES, ETC.

Reports from all districts indicate that the great majority of our scenic reserves are in a good state of preservation. A few cases of timber trespass were reported and fully investigated, and two convictions were obtained. No very serious damage from fires occurred during the year. The most untoward incident was the burning of portion of a reserve in the Marlborough Sounds through the accidental spreading of a fire which had been lit on the beach by some young people. Prompt action on the part of an honorary inspector and local residents prevented the fire from sweeping the whole reserve.

A case of apparently deliberate vandalism was reported in another Marlborough reserve, where six veteran totaras were destroyed by fire, and other damage done. A reward was offered by the Pelorus Bridge Scenic Board for information leading to the conviction of the vandals, but unfortunately without result. Police inquiries also were fruitless in this case.

A number of reserves in various localities urgently require the erection of stock-proof fencing; but the Department is unable to obtain the necessary funds. However, it is hoped that the undoubted necessity of adequately safeguarding these State assets will be recognized in the near future by an increased allocation of funds, and that it will be possible for the Department, assisted also by local subscriptions in many cases, to give this important matter more adequate attention than present circumstances permit.

#### GENERAL.

The reservation of further areas of Crown land of scenic interest is being carried out as opportunity permits. No progress can, however, be made at present in the acquisition of privately owned lands that should be held by the State. It is a pity that even a moderate sum cannot be allocated for this purpose, as the Department feels that it would be possible to acquire some desirable scenic areas at a very reasonable figure.

Public interest in our scenic reserves is steadily increasing, and there is no doubt that there is a keener appreciation generally of the wisdom of preserving representative areas in their natural state. The Department is glad to note the growing strength of public opinion in favour of the preservation of native bush, and is keenly appreciative of the good work that is being carried out by various societies and bodies and enthusiastic people throughout the Dominion. Local authorities, too, are showing greater interest in scenery preservation, and in many cases are evincing a keen desire to assist the Department in preventing trespass and vandalism.

The Trounson Kauri Park Reserve in the Dargaville District attracted over seven thousand visitors during the year. No reliable figures can be given for other areas; but many of the better known reserves are extremely popular, and give pleasure and inspiration to great numbers of our people.

Record numbers of young gannets were hatched in the Cape Kidnapper Bird Sanctuary Reserve during the past season. Some work carried out during the winter in providing more nesting accommodation seemed to be thoroughly appreciated by the birds, who made full use of all the new ledges that were cut out of the rock. The reserve was a popular resort in the summer months, and it is pleasing to record that the gannets were not molested in any way.

Control of the Waiotapu Scenic Reserve was handed over to the Tourist Department during the year. This reserve contains some interesting thermal features, and, when the access has been improved and suitable pathways laid out, should develop into a popular tourist resort.

Applications continue to be received from sawmillers for milling-rights over timber in some of our reserves, particularly in cases where good stands of white-pine exist in handy positions. There has of course been no difficulty in refusing these applications. In one case what appeared to be a deliberate attempt was made to stampede the Department into granting milling-rights over a considerable area on the plea that the bush would be flooded and destroyed on the completion of certain hydro-electric works. On inquiry it was ascertained that the statements made by interested parties were grossly incorrect and could not possibly be supported by the facts of the case.

An increasing number of applications for mining privileges over scenic reserves were dealt with during the year. Consent was given to a few applications for prospecting licenses subject to special conditions; but in most cases consent was declined. There is no intention of consenting to the granting of mining privileges where prospecting or other mining operations will result in damage to the reserves, and the interests of scenery preservation generally will be fully protected.

#### APPENDICES.

A schedule of reserves made and reservations revoked during the year, accompanied by a statement of expenditure, follows as Appendix A, while Appendix B records the work carried out on Kapiti Island.

It is hoped that it will soon again be possible to resume publication of detailed reports from the various land districts.