

The land added to the Arthur Pass National Park comprises 11,100 acres of Crown land and 18,300 acres of State forest extending up the Taramakau Valley on its southern side as far as Harper's Pass. Thanks are due to the State Forest Service for making the State forest land available. The scenic features of the additional area are very marked, and particular mention may be made of Lake Kaurapataka, a most beautiful sheet of water situated about six miles from Aitken's Railway-station at an altitude of a little over 1,300 ft.

Section 26 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1938, made special provision for the care, management, and protection of the national-park areas along the Te Anau—Milford Sound Road. In 1934 various areas of provisional State forest reserves totalling some 48,440 acres in the Eglinton and Upper Hollyford Valleys along the route of the new road were declared by special legislation to be set apart for national-park purposes. In the following year various areas of Crown land totalling some 90,650 acres in the same locality were permanently reserved under the Land Act for the same purposes. The new road has quickly become popular with motorists and others, and it has been necessary for the Department to regulate camping along the road. Camping-grounds have been laid off and facilities provided for the use of the public, while during the season a patrolman is appointed to supervise camping and to prevent vandalism and fire damage. Charges for the use of the camping-grounds have been made at the rate of 2s. per day or 5s. per week, and camping anywhere except in the camping-grounds has been strictly prohibited. No difficulty has been experienced in collecting the very reasonable charges made, but as doubts arose as to the authority for imposing such charges it was deemed advisable to place the position beyond all doubt. The special legislation therefore declared it to be unlawful to camp on the national-park areas along the new road except in the camping-grounds already established or to be established in the future, and authorized the Minister of Lands to fix such camping charges as he might think fit. Charges made in past seasons were also validated. It was considered absolutely essential that the scenic beauty of the locality should be safeguarded to the fullest possible extent, and the legislation therefore made special provision for the care, management, and protection of the park areas along the road. In that connection penal provisions based generally on those contained in the Scenery Preservation Amendment Act, 1933, were adopted.

No cases of damage by fire or otherwise in the area were reported during the year. The patrolman, Mr. W. Ballantyne, was most vigilant in carrying out his duties, and is to be congratulated on the success of his work.

Following on the passing of the special legislation referred to above, vigorous action was taken to have cats and dogs cleared off the national-park area, and in this direction the Resident Engineer of the Public Works Department gave valuable help in checking the keeping of these animals by employees on public works.

Notwithstanding adverse weather conditions, the public camping-grounds were used to a greater extent than during the previous year. Camping fees amounting to £59 3s. were collected during the season.

A few acres were surveyed at Cascade Creek, and will be formally set apart as a site for the accommodation buildings provided and controlled by the Tourist Department.

A strong and insistent demand exists for private deer-shooting permits in the national-park area, and after consultation with the Internal Affairs Department it was decided to issue short-term permits to approved persons.

The improvement of the public camping-grounds is receiving attention, and proposals are in hand for the erection of a general shelter-shed and other amenities.

During the year grants of £500 and £350 were made to the Egmont and Arthur Pass National Park Boards for general administration and park-improvement purposes. In this connection it is to be noted that there is no fixed annual appropriation of Government moneys for the purposes of the national parks. Where Park Boards have been established their funds consist of—

- (a) All moneys accruing in respect of the park, penalties, fees, &c.
- (b) All moneys from time to time appropriated by Parliament in aid of the Board's funds.
- (c) All moneys from time to time contributed to the Board by any local authority out of its general funds.
- (d) All other moneys received by the Board from any source as part of its general revenue, including rents derived from leases and tenancies.

In addition, the Boards have borrowing-powers (subject to the approval of the Local Government Loans Board) for the purpose of carrying out park improvements, and may pledge as security for any loan the funds, property, or revenues of the Board. This does not permit of the pledging of the land comprised in the park as part of the security. The land itself remains vested in the Crown as a permanent reserve.

Government grants for the development of the national parks are provided from time to time by way of direct appropriation out of the Consolidated Fund, and any grants by local bodies are made out of the general funds of such bodies provided by way of local rates. There are no fixed annual grants or subsidies either out of the Crown's revenues or local bodies' revenues. There is, however, a growing realization that the national parks are properly the concern of the State, and possibly in the future a reasonable annual appropriation of funds for park purposes will be regarded as a matter of course.

Extracts from the annual reports of the Tongariro, Egmont, and Arthur Pass National Park Boards are appended hereto.