

## PRIVATE SCENIC RESERVES.

No private scenic reserves were declared during the year under the provisions of section 6 of the Scenery Preservation Amendment Act, 1933. It appears that a number of owners of bush areas are not altogether satisfied of the merits of the legislation generally, while the question of rates and land-tax causes them some concern. The declaration of any land as a private scenic reserve does not affect the position with respect to rates and land-tax. The owner remains liable as before. Scenic bush, however, is not valued unless it contains milling-trees of commercial value. Even then the value of any such trees, although subject to assessment under the Valuation of Land Act, is not subject to the payment of rates or taxes. The value of the *land* on which the trees stand is, however, subject to local rates and to land-tax. It is possible that some means may be devised of improving the position, so far as rates and taxes are concerned, of the private owner who is willing to have portion of his property declared a private scenic reserve. At the same time, it is considered that the private-scenic-reserve legislation is definitely helpful and deserving of consideration on the part of owners who wish to preserve areas of bush on their properties. The legislation gives extra protection to the property-owner against vandalism without affecting his rights as owner except to the extent he may agree to forego them, and the Department will at any time be pleased to consider any application on the part of a private owner for the declaration of his property, or part thereof, as a private scenic reserve.

## GENERAL.

The usual maintenance and improvement work has been carried out on the Trounson Kauri Park. This reserve is most popular with the general public, and is of outstanding interest and value.

Over four thousand permits were issued to visitors to the Cape Kidnapper Bird Sanctuary, and the water-supply proved unequal to requirements. Two more tanks will probably have to be installed later on. During the year the rest-house was added to and the conveniences improved.

A number of small grants were made to Scenic Boards for fencing and general improvements, and the Department itself attended to the fencing of various areas. Tracks have been opened up through some of the reserves in the vicinity of popular holiday resorts, and scenic notices posted up in prominent positions.

The Rotoiti Scenic Board, controlling Lake Rotoiti and a large area of scenic reserves in that locality, has made some much-needed improvements to its reserves, and is to be commended for its interest in the provision of amenities for the public and for its effective supervision of the areas under its control.

The Pelorus Bridge Scenic Board has provided further public amenities at the picnic-ground and has now definitely succeeded in bringing the blackberry and fern menace under control. The reserve, which is a stopping-place for thousands of travellers throughout the year, is in good condition and native bird life is plentiful.

The Lake Kaniere Scenic Board, owing to lack of financial support, has been unable to do much in the way of improving the amenities at the lake, but during the forthcoming year it is anticipated that further much-needed improvements will be added to those already supplied. A great deal of interest has been aroused in boating, and a number of boat-shed sites are to be provided to meet the demand. In choosing sites every care is taken to see that as little as possible of the native bush is disturbed, and any sheds erected must be well built and maintained in such a condition that they will add to and not detract from the beauty of the shores of the lake.

The year has seen the passing of the Summit Road Scenic Reserves Board, which for many years controlled a chain of reserves on the Port Hills. After negotiations between the Christchurch City Council, the Board, and the Department, it was decided not to reappoint the Board for a further term, but instead to vest control of some of the reserves in the City Council and to place the remainder under the direct control of the Department. The reserves now under the Council's control are eight in number, extending from the Dyer's Pass Road practically to Evans' Pass. They border on that portion of the Summit Road which was recently reconditioned and tar-sealed, and which is now one of the principal scenic highways adjacent to Christchurch. Seven reserves now come under the Department's control. These lie at intervals along the Summit Road from Dyer's Pass to Akaroa.

Control of the Forest Hill Reserve, set apart last year, has been vested in a special Board comprising representatives of the Invercargill City Council, the Southland County Council, and the Department. Although some timber has been removed in the past the area is mostly bush clad, and its reservation has been greatly appreciated in the district. Access has been improved and some facilities for visitors provided by the Board, and the reserve is becoming a popular resort for residents of Invercargill and surrounding districts.

The Public Works Department was given permission to fell some small patches of bush on a reserve on the northern shore of Lake Rotoma in connection with the erection of the Arapuni-Edgecumbe transmission-line.

An application for prospecting licenses covering all those portions of Lakes Rotoroa and Rotoiti, Nelson District, shallow enough to permit working by means of dredges, together with all flats and other areas on the shores of the lakes that could possibly be worked by dredges, was declined during the year. The application was submitted as a preliminary step towards the obtaining of dredging-claim licenses. It was considered that it would be unwise to permit dredging operations in the lakes and around their shores, and that it would be unfair to consent to the granting of prospecting licenses and then to refuse consent to applications for dredging claims.