

# Proposed Tararua National Park

**A MOVEMENT is afoot to have the whole of the Tararua Ranges at least, and if possible also its extension via the Rimutakas to Palliser Bay, declared a National Park.**

The sponsors are the Tararua National Park Project Committee with headquarters at Masterton. Included in its personnel are members and ex-members of Catchment Boards, River Boards, Electric Power Boards and Tramping Clubs. This Committee has circulated an attractively produced illustrated pamphlet in support of its case to local bodies, tramping clubs, Members of Parliament and others.

In this it points out that milling in the upper reaches of the rivers has left along almost the whole eastern side of the Tararua Ranges, right up to the foothills in many places, extensive shingle terraces, through which all the main streams from the Ranges must pass, the rapidity of the water run-off after heavy rains being greatly increased. It mentions that the botanist member of the Wairarapa Catchment Board some years ago recommended that at least 25,000 acres of the eastern foothills of the Ranges be resumed and

either replanted or allowed to revert to natural growth. More licenses to mill bush further inside the area have, however, since been granted. It also quotes a combined advertisement of the N.Z. Forest Service and the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council in the Wairarapa Press, addressed to residents of the Wairarapa, which says: **"The forests of the Tararua Ranges are watershed protection forests which must be preserved. They are necessary for the conservation of water supplies for many towns and settlements, to minimise the flooding of fertile land and to prevent erosion"**.

The President and Secretary of our Society and the Wellington Regional Planning Officer were invited to be present at a meeting of the Committee which was held on Sunday, 20th April, at Featherston, the time and place being arranged by the Committee for their convenience.

The Committee is asking for support for its case and the response so far has been encouraging. It hopes to send a deputation to the Hon. Minister of Lands to lay the case for a Tararua National Park before him.

goblin-like from over or behind great blocks of stone which themselves were all completely swathed in the most luxurious growth of moss, lichens and fern I had ever seen. As we entered we seemed to pass into another world, cold, damp and eerie in its deathly stillness. I remember as we entered being startled by a small bird flying close in front of me, a couple of feet away, and making no sound; at the same time Howes' voice faded away, absorbed in the great blanket of moss and lichen that clothed this extraordinary place. I dropped my camera tripod but did not notice it as there was no sound of impact with the ground. Walking on this carpet of moss and lichen was almost noiseless and to talk to each other we almost had to shout. I retraced my steps to find my tripod buried in the moss where it had fallen, with only its head showing—it was a wonder it did not disappear entirely. I found I could bury my arm to the elbow in the moss at the spot where it had fallen.

Looking around at the fantastic shapes of trees with the equally fantastic festoons of moss and great growths of lichen, one's imagination could run riot and as we walked through and out the other side I agreed that the place was well named the "Goblin Forest". Where it grows rainfall is over abundant, about 250 inches per year. This, enhanced by the mist produced by falling avalanches and cascading streams, together with a situation relatively sheltered from wind, has produced an exceptional climatic condition in which has developed this most extraordinarily luxuriant growth of moss and lichen that gives the spot its character. It was a particularly wet season when I first saw it. A few years later I visited it again, the season was drier, the growth less luxuriant and the effect less weird. Probably it varies with the nature of the season.

No doubt there are many spots in the mountain fastnesses of southern Fiordland of the same character.