

EDITORIALS

Waipoua Forest Sanctuary

WELCOMING the announcement made by the Minister of Forests, the Hon. Mr. Corbett, that an area of 22,500 acres of the Waipoua State Forest has been proclaimed as a Forest Sanctuary under the Forests Act, the Society pays full tribute to the Minister, who is known to be a sincere lover of our native bush. The Minister's decision means that a very considerable area, and indeed one far greater than originally offered, is to become a forest reserve specially protected by the sanctuary provisions of the Forests Act and so immune from commercial exploitation in the future.

The Society is grateful for the decision that has been made; but at the same time hopes that the proposal originally made to the authorities for the reservation as a national park of the whole of the Waipoua State Forest may yet commend itself to the Minister. The public generally may not perhaps fully realise that a kauri forest in a natural environment changes very gradually through the ages. The giants of the forest mature and pass away, being slowly succeeded by other types of bush; but kauri forest itself lives on as adjoining areas in their turn gradually become clothed with kauris in various stages of growth. Thus there would always be in such an environment dying kauris in process of replacement by other trees, kauris in the full glory of their magnificent maturity, young and vigorous kauris striving for fullness of growth and beauty, and virgin areas where the kauri seedlings were yet to appear. Such would be the cycle of nature, unattainable now in most cases because of man's use and occupation of the land, but still possible at Waipoua provided the whole of the State Forest area is left to nature to deal with in her own way.

The Society does not for a moment question the sincerity and good intentions of the Forest Service, which it understands is to manage that large portion of the Waipoua State Forest (including scrub lands and young kauri forest) outside the boundaries of the proposed forest sanctuary, and which it knows will faithfully preserve the actual sanctuary area. Nevertheless the Society remains firmly of the opinion that the whole of the State Forest reserve should be a national park, and that any work carried out therein should be purely of a protective character, with no question of forest management or experimentation in regeneration, and that control should be in the hands of a National Park Board, which would have as its chief and abiding interest the preservation of the whole area in its natural condition, and which should confidently be able to rely on adequate support from the State in the carrying out of a sacred trust.

