

## The Menace of Fire

It is not for nothing that the Forest Service and other responsible bodies exhort everyone to be careful with matches, cigarette butts, and camp fires during the summer period. A carelessly thrown away butt may wreak damage to the extent of many thousands of pounds. Many newspapers have stated the position; the two following extracts from second leaders are typical of these statements.

The New Zealand Forest Service has warned that the fire risk is steadily mounting and could reach danger point in a very short time. Constant warnings of the danger of fire to New Zealand's forest resources are necessary not only because of their increased vulnerability but also because the nation's timber resources have never been more indispensable than they are today.

The ubiquitous motor vehicle has brought New Zealanders in the mass into contact with the countryside. For many miles in some parts of the country main highways pass through or alongside native bush reserves or the man-made forests, tens of thousands of acres of which could be consumed by a careless fire. A single match or cigarette butt or the ashes from a pipe dropped or thrown out of a passing vehicle could cause gaunt destruction.

In an age that is barely removed from the age of deliberate destruction of bush to pave the way for land settlement special endeavours are necessary to inculcate the idea that forest protection has supplanted bush destruction, to an extent that today the destruction of large areas of bush or exotic forest could constitute a national catastrophe. To add point to this remark, one is invited to imagine the consequences to New Zealand's pulp and paper industry should fire destroy a large section of the Kaingaroa Forest or the Kingleith Forest.

*Gisborne Herald, 3 January, 1963.*

Though last week's steady rainfall has reduced the forest-fire hazard for the time being, this temporary relief from the risk of fire in the open will soon disappear with the return of dry summer conditions. It is, therefore, still as necessary as ever to heed the official warnings that have been given before the rain that a fire hazard was building up and in some places was becoming quite intense. As pointed out by the Chief Fire Officer of the New Zealand Forest Service, Mr. C. O. Bridgeman, rain at this time of the year has little lasting effect, for vegetation that has previously dried out under semi-drought conditions quickly dries out again after the rain passes.

With the pleasures of summer go responsibilities to see that fire damage to property, bush, and farmland is not sparked off through someone's negligence. The fire risk is apt to increase with the extension of travel. People now move about the country far more than they did, many of them penetrating into remote parts of the country and carrying with them all too often an element of carelessness. One of summer's worries is the risk of fire in the open.

### NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 35th Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held in the lecture hall, Central Library, Mercer Street, Wellington, on SATURDAY, 1st JUNE, 1963, at 9.30 a.m.

### AGENDA

1. Apologies.
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at Wellington on 2nd June, 1962.
3. Business arising out of minutes.
4. Consideration of Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.
5. Councillors who are retiring under Rule 9 (5) (a) and (b), and who are eligible for re-election: Messrs. D. Bowie, R. W. Cooper, Mrs. A. J. Du Pont.
6. Election of three members to the Council under Rule 9 (1) (d).
7. Declaration of names of members appointed to the Council by Branches and Sections in terms of Rule 9 (1) (b) and (c).
8. Consideration of Remits received in accordance with the Rules.
9. Appointment of Auditor.
10. General.

D. A. McCurdy,

Secretary.

Wellington,  
28 February, 1963.

*Note:* At the evening social function Mr. L. W. McCaskill will deliver the Sanderson Memorial Address: "The Man and His Work."

The fire that springs from trifles is all too common. An overlooked ember in a picnic fire, a match carelessly tossed into roadside scrub from a passing motor vehicle, a cigarette butt not properly extinguished can ignite fires that threaten those thousands of acres of countryside, involving lives, homes and holdings. New Zealand has a sorry record of valuable timber stands destroyed by fire caused by carelessness on someone's part. A little thoughtfulness along with commonsense precautions is the best safeguard against the forest fire hazard. There is a responsibility on all to see that these elementary safeguards are observed.

*The Dominion, 14 January, 1963.*