

GENERAL

Very little fire damage occurred during the year. The Sounds district of Marlborough has for many years been a dangerous area during the summer and autumn, and it is therefore particularly pleasing to record that the number of fires there is decreasing. It is felt that landholders in the district are gaining a better appreciation of the value of scenic reserves.

There are still a good many cases of stock trespass, but until fencing-wire becomes more readily available the straying of stock cannot always be prevented.

The Cape Kidnapper Bird Sanctuary continues to be a source of interest to large numbers of visitors every season. The honorary Rangers reported that the gannets did not return to the nesting-ground in such large numbers as in former years; but no special significance is attached to this. A party of Rovers from the Napier Scout Troop formed a working party in the early part of the season, and with materials supplied by the Sanctuary Board painted the rest hut and environs. This help was greatly appreciated by the Board.

Some small grants were made to various Scenic Boards for fencing and general improvements, but it is, of course, extremely difficult to do much in the way of fencing.

Plans are under consideration for a long-term scheme of planting at Trounson Park to protect the reserve from damage by gales. The reserve maintains its great popularity with the public.

A good many inquiries were received for post-splitting rights in scenic reserves, due, no doubt, to the scarcity of fencing-timber on ordinary Crown lands. Applications of this nature are almost always refused, as, although dead trees can sometimes be removed to advantage, in the great majority of cases it would be unwise to grant permission for the removal of timber from these reserves.

Public interest in scenic reserves is increasing considerably throughout the Dominion. Amongst the many organizations fostering a love of trees and natural scenery, special mention may be made of the Forest Society of Whangarei, which has a large membership and is spreading enthusiasm throughout the North.

REVIEW OF OPERATIONS SINCE 1st JANUARY, 1936

Since the 1st January, 1936, areas totalling 219,000 acres have been set aside under the Scenery Preservation Act throughout the Dominion. Of this large area, no less than 53,800 acres consisted of State forest land made available by the State Forest Service for scenic reservation. Purchases of private and Maori land covered a little over 13,000 acres. In some of these purchases financial assistance was given by the Bruce trustees and by various local authorities, while in other cases substantial amounts were raised by public subscriptions. The amount actually expended out of the scenic vote on the acquisition of land was slightly over £16,000. Fourteen gift areas totalled over 1,600 acres.

FUTURE OPERATIONS

A great deal still remains to be done in the matter of scenery preservation. Various privately owned areas and Maori blocks are of scenic value, and will be acquired in due course if satisfactory arrangements can be made. Further areas of State forest will also doubtless be handed over from time to time for permanent reservation under the Scenery Preservation Act, while a good many areas of Crown land have been listed for reservation in the near future. It is hoped, also, when the general supply position improves, to do a considerable amount of fencing on selected reserves that are at present insufficiently fenced.