

## GENERAL

Very dry summer weather was experienced in some districts, and fires were more than usually prevalent. In North Auckland some fairly serious fires broke out on or near scenic reserves, but fortunately they were kept within reasonable bounds principally by the efforts and vigilance of local residents and Government officers. In the Marlborough Sounds considerable damage was done by fires at Ngaruru, Cullen's Point, and Edgecombe Point. The prevalence of fires throughout considerable portions of the Sounds is causing much concern, and it is apparent that some effective and generally acceptable method of control of burning operations will have to be decided upon and put into being as soon as possible if further destruction of scenic reserves is to be prevented. The absence of serious fires in the more popular Marlborough reserves such as those controlled by the Hundalee, Pelorus, and Ship Cove Scenic Boards is probably due to the vigilance of the honorary Inspectors and caretakers and the respect the general public show for these beautiful spots, and it is a great pity that other reserves should have suffered damage by fire.

The Cape Kidnapper Bird Sanctuary continues to prove a source of interest to large numbers of visitors each season. Reports indicate that the gannet colony is on the increase, the birds in recent years being more numerous than hitherto. The facilities of the Rest Hut on the area are being maintained, and members of the Royal Society during the season spent some time on the sanctuary in observing the habits of the gannets.

Firebreaks at the Ball's Clearing Reserve at Puketitiri will be extended as soon as possible to completely cover the most dangerous points.

As reported last year, the establishment by the New Plymouth Scenic Reserves Board of a kauri park as a memorial to the late William Henry Skimmer was intended, and this is now an accomplished fact. Through the assistance and advice of a well-known Taranaki horticulturist who is also a member of the Board, the kauri trees have been successfully planted.

Work at Trounson Kauri Park included the maintenance and repair of forest tracks, the discing and maintenance of firebreaks, fencing along the eastern firebreak road frontage, and cultivation of further areas prior to grassing them down.

A few grants were made to Scenic Boards for improvements to the reserves under their control. Improvements were carried out on the Lake Kaniere and Lake Mahinapua Reserves, which, being easily accessible, are patronized by large numbers of visitors.

Fencing is required on many reserves to keep them free from stock. It has not been possible to do much in this way of late years; but it is hoped to gradually arrange for a good deal of fencing work from now on.

## PROPOSED PURCHASES AND RESERVATIONS

A statement of expenditure is attached to Appendix A of this report. It will be seen by reference thereto that very little was spent in the purchase of land during the year. However, that does not mean that purchases of suitable areas are not being made. In fact, the acquisition of several comparatively large areas involving a very considerable expenditure was well advanced at the end of the period under review, and other purchases are under contemplation. Particular attention is being paid to the acquisition of scenic areas along the Taumarunui Tokaanu Road, the Rotorua-Waikaremoana Road, and other highways which are or will be popular tourist routes. Nor is the reservation of Crown-owned areas of scenic interest being neglected, and in this connection many areas of Crown land and State forest, particularly in South Westland, have been selected for setting apart as permanent scenic reserves.

## APPENDICES

The Appendices to this report are listed hereunder:

- A. Schedule of reserves made during the year, together with a statement of expenditure.
- B. Brief notes on Kapiti Island.