

Considerable areas of State forest and scenic reserves were included in the Arthur Pass and Abel Tasman Parks under these provisions, and further areas of State forest have recently been added to the Arthur Pass Park. Close co-operation is maintained between the Lands Department, the Forest Service, and other State Departments in matters concerning the protection of high country and bush preservation in general.

In South Westland there are many scenic reserves of extensive area, some of them being practically of national park status. For instance, the Westland glacial scenic reserves, which include the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers, cover an area of over 187,000 acres. These and other reserves in that district provide the foundation for the constitution at an appropriate time of a national park of outstanding scenic interest.

ACCESS, ACCOMMODATION, ETC.

Accommodation for tourists and others visiting the national parks is provided principally by the Chateau on the lower slopes of Mount Ruapehu, the mountain hostels on Mount Egmont, the Hermitage at Mount Cook, and the Milford Hostel at the head of Milford Sound. The Chateau, the Hermitage, and the Milford Hostel are conducted by the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, while the Egmont hostels are operated under franchise granted by the Egmont National Park Board. There is also on the shores of Lake Te Anau (the gateway to Fiordland) an hotel operated by the Tourist and Health Resorts Department. There are motor roads to the Chateau, the Egmont hostels, and the Hermitage, and roads to facilitate access to snowfields and skiing-grounds. The road from Te Anau to Milford Sound via the Eglinton and Upper Hollyford Valleys, the Homer Tunnel, and the Cleddau Valley is not yet fully completed throughout its full length. There are numerous tracks throughout the parks, the best known one being the celebrated Milford Track, running from the north-western shore of Lake Te Anau across the granite mountains to Milford Sound. Camping-grounds have been provided in various places, although nothing elaborate has so far been established in that way. However, it is probable that camping-grounds will be extended and improved before very long.

VALUE OF THE PARKS: THEIR APPEAL TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE TOURIST FROM OVERSEAS

No attempt is being made here to describe the natural wonders of the parks and the remarkable and varied nature of their scenic quality. It is felt that to do so in any adequate manner would require separate and lengthy treatment. For present purposes it may suffice to say that they are of immense value not only as climatic and water-conservation reserves, but also as reservations of extensive tracts of virgin country providing for the rest, recreation, enjoyment, and inspiration of the people. Their æsthetic and spiritual values cannot possibly be set down in mere words. They appeal to the adventurous spirit of the tramp and the mountaineer; but no less strongly to those who find rest and refreshment of spirit in quieter contemplation of nature's intricate pattern of mountains and glaciers, forests, lakes and rivers, and the majestic sounds of the sea. Their influence on tourist traffic to and within the Dominion has been, and will no doubt continue to be, immense. Their attractiveness to visitors from overseas can probably be increased in various ways; but it must always be kept in mind that nothing should be done that might prove detrimental to the natural features of the parks. These great national reserves should be so administered and maintained as to be preserved, as far as possible, in their natural state. Native plant and animal life should, as far as possible, be preserved, and introduced plant and animal life should, as far as possible, be exterminated. Reasonable development of the parks for recreation purposes must take place, but should be undertaken only in conformity with the principles stated. There should, however, be ample scope for development over the years.