

Mamaku Forest, through which the Auckland-Rotorua Railway passes, has been grievously marred by the operations of the timber-millers. It is urgently necessary that further destruction of this bush in the vicinity of the railway-line should be interdicted. The removal of the splendid pohutukawa trees on the Auckland coast, particularly on the Hauraki Gulf islands, is also deplorable.

I would most strongly recommend the Government to immediately proceed to resume the control of specially interesting and attractive forest lands on the principal routes of travel, and to rigidly conserve scenic forests now in the hands of the Crown where the preservation of such timbered areas would not interfere with the progress of settlement. There are many regions of forest which are of little or no commercial value, but which immeasurably enhance the attractiveness of the country in the eye of the traveller. The vanishing native-bird life also has sympathetic claims upon the people of the colony. Many of these otherwise useless forests on rough mountainous land would, if saved from felling and burning, not only agreeably adorn the routes of travel, but also serve as a last home for the rarer New Zealand birds. The Government might also assist in the preservation of forests by making such provision in the conditions of land-tenure as would encourage settlers taking up new bush land from the Crown to leave untouched reasonable areas of timber, instead of felling and burning the whole of the bush on their sections. I would also suggest that in cases where forests contain timber of value for milling purposes, but where the land is not fit for agricultural or pastoral occupations, the removal of the milling-timbers be conducted under Government supervision, and that strict regulations be laid down to prevent the destruction of young forest-growth. Stringent measures should be taken for the conservation of the forests still standing; and, seeing that the Government is annually spending a large sum on afforesting-work, I am of the opinion that it should see that not a single native tree is wastefully or unnecessarily cut down. If some such steps as those I suggest are adopted, it is possible to save many magnificent areas of forest which if delivered over to the fire-stick would leave in their place unsightly and barren wastes for all time.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC SPOTS.

One of the national duties now devolving upon the Government is the care of places of historic importance throughout the colony. It is highly desirable that the preservation of these localities, and the perpetuation of the associations connected with them, should be intrusted to some Department of State. During the short period that the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts has been in existence it has endeavoured to direct attention to this subject, and to awaken public sympathy in favour of preserving as sacred places made memorable by events of the past, more particularly the scenes of the wars of 1860-70. New Zealand should profit by the example of older countries, where old battle-grounds and scenes of interesting associations are jealously cared for as the property of the nation. Such a sentiment is helpful to the formation of a truly patriotic and a national spirit, and there is the more matter-of-fact advantage that it pays. Overseas visitors to a country are often far more deeply interested in historic associations of the land than are its inhabitants. Local history and romance have a value which very closely approaches that of scenery, and in this colony we have all the elements which should make it one of the most interesting countries on the traveller's world-route.

A deplorable indifference to such considerations has prevailed in most parts of New Zealand in the past. In various districts, more especially in Waikato and Taranaki, redoubts and pas have been deliberately razed long after the cessation of the Maori troubles. In too many instances local bodies have been the offenders—these monuments of our history-making days were often looked upon as useless excrescences which should be destroyed as quickly and as completely as possible. Fortunately a wider and broader feeling is now abroad, and local residents are in many cases willing and anxious to co-operate with the Government in the work of conserving these spots. Hundreds of such localities can be named, many of them not only interesting because of their associations, but beautiful in their accessories of scenery. Some of them are public reserves; others are on private property; many on Native lands. It is advisable that the principal localities should be inspected, in order to prevent any further vandalism and to obtain data on which to frame suggestions for their permanent upkeep in as nearly as possible their original form. The sites of the old pas of Ohaeawai and Ruapekapeka in Heke's war in the North; the scenes of such engagements as Rangiriri, Orakau, Ngatapa, Porere; the more important positions attacked in the Taranaki campaign; the ancient fortifications, &c., on Banks Peninsula and elsewhere in the South should all receive attention. Such military blockhouses and redoubts as still exist throughout the North Island are worth keeping intact and restoring where necessary. The United States of America sets us an example in this respect which may well be followed. The nation which has carried utilitarianism to its highest pitch is also the foremost in preserving its sacred landmarks, and in ransacking every corner for stores and records which enhance the interest of its beauty-spots in places of historic memory in the eyes of the world.

SPORT.

The value of sport as an attraction to visitors from the outside world cannot be too highly estimated. The excellent deer-stalking and trout-fishing to be had throughout the colony brings many shooting-men and anglers from the United Kingdom, India, and elsewhere. Many travellers are struck with the fact that better shooting is to be had in the red-deer districts of the colony than in older lands, and that the pursuit of the sport is much less expensive here. The aim of the Department must be to make New Zealand one of the foremost of the sporting countries in the world. This colony has all the natural attributes necessary to that end. Several kinds of suitable big game are required, and I am convinced that any money spent in the direction of importation and acclimatisation of such will be well spent, and would be recouped time and again in the future. In order to ascertain on what terms and conditions suitable animals can be obtained, the Department has been in communication with Great Britain, the United States,