

SCENERY-PRESERVATION IN THE ARGENTINE.

Elsewhere this increasingly important duty of preservation of natural scenery has been recognised by the State Governments, and as a typical example may be quoted extracts from a publication by Dr. Eugene Autran on "The National Parks of the Argentine," which states at its commencement that the aim of the work is merely to put before the scientific world certain facts of an interesting nature.

The first park dealt with is the *National Park of the Iguazu*.

M. Charles Thays, the distinguished Director of Public Parks and Promenades and of the Botanic Garden of Buenos Ayres, was officially directed by the Argentine Government, in April, 1902, to go into the territory of Missions, which formerly belonged to the Jesuits, and is situated after the manner of a wedge between Brazil and Paraguay. His instructions were to investigate the celebrated falls of the Iguazu, which, although they are as yet but little known, surpass those of Niagara, and are, moreover, situated in a marvellous territory, surrounded by a subtropical vegetation—all which matters the Argentine Government expect will in course of time make them the rendezvous of crowds of tourists from the world at large. M. Thays was instructed to choose sites for the construction of hotels, of casinos, of baths, and so on; to suggest roads, in order to give access to the magnificent virgin forests, and to look out for spots where the best view of the falls could be obtained. Having carried out this work, he put forward a general project, which was approved of by the Government in July, 1902, and which is being put into execution. The area of the park will be 25,000 hectares—rather more than fifteen square French leagues. In his recommendations M. Thays has especially sought to preserve the delightful aspect which a luxuriant vegetation gives when associated with mountain scenery. *Every care is to be taken to stop the interference of man, and to leave the place in that wild and primitive state which is its principal charm.* An excellent map of the park and its surroundings, together with photographs of the falls, are published in the report.

The second national park is that of *Nahuel-Huapi*. This is designed to show the varied aspect of the scenery and natural productions of the Argentine, and is situated in a region which offers a great contrast to that of the above-described reserve. The lake Nahuel-Huapi is situated in the extreme south of the territory of Neuquen, in the vicinity of the Patagonian Andes. It is extremely irregular in shape, and its area is about 430 square kilometers. It lies between the 71st and 72nd parallels of longitude, and the 41st parallel of latitude passes through its centre. It was for a long time known as "the mysterious lake," but now that small steamboats ply on its waters, harbours have been made on its shores, and agricultural and commercial establishments have been organized the veil of mystery which surrounds it has been torn aside by civilisation. A railway has already reached the station of Neuquen, and will eventually traverse to Nahuel-Huapi, and, later on, passing through Chilean territory, will reach the shores of the Pacific. The region is one of forests and mountains. The former contain four species of beech, also various species of *Araucaria*, of *Podocarpus*, of myrtles, of *Anacardiaceæ*, and of *Celastrinæ*; and a list of the flora, containing 376 species of flowering-plants and ferns, is given at the end of the report.

The park owes its origin to a donation from Dr. Francisco P. Moreno, formerly Director of the Museum of La Plata, but who has more latterly been for a number of years the Argentine Agent at Santiago in Chili, and in London. For his valuable services he received a large land-grant in Patagonia, on the shores of the lake, and of this land he, in 1903, returned to the Government three square leagues, to be set aside as a national park.

An interesting experiment is being carried on with regard to the acclimatisation of fish in the lake, a million eggs of whitefish and 150,000 eggs of trout and salmon having been brought from the United States to Buenos Ayres as a gift from the North American Government to that of the Argentine. The results of the experiment are so far considered very favourable.

The value of the report is increased by details of a botanical survey of this last-named park, made in order to give the people of the Argentine some idea of its value as a national museum. The list of plants should be of interest to New-Zealanders, since quite a number of genera are common to both countries, such names as *Drymis caltha*, *Podocarpus luzula*, *Libocedrus acena*, *Viola*, *Epilobium*, and *Gunnera* occurring.

INSPECTION OF RESERVES.

Mr. E. Phillips Turner (licensed surveyor), an officer of the Department of Lands, was appointed as from the 1st October, 1907, to the position of Inspector of Scenic Reserves, and commenced his duties by inspecting the reserves in the Canterbury and Otago Districts. He was then detailed to execute a topographical survey of the Tongariro National Park, and is now carrying out inspections of the scenic reserves in the Auckland District. His report will be found in Appendix B.

SCENERY PRESERVATION BOARD.

Several meetings of the district Scenery Preservation Boards were held during the year, and the report of the Chairman of the Board thereon appears in Appendix C.

WANGANUI RIVER.

In last year's report special attention was paid to the scenery along the route of the North Island Main Trunk Railway, and a detailed report, maps, and photographs gave full particulars of what had been done and what was proposed to be done along the well-known route. This year similar information is supplied regarding the Wanganui River, as it has always been recognised that this magnificent waterway is unrivalled in its natural beauty, and deserves the greatest possible protection from any source of danger or destruction to its scenery. Appendix D contains the recommendations of the late Scenery Preservation Commissioners, and a brief account of the proposed reserve, whilst the maps at the end of this report illustrate the proposed boundaries.