

RESERVATIONS DURING YEAR.

The total area of reservations made during the year was some 2,354 acres.

In the North Auckland Land District the area of 652 acres 2 roods on the Waitakerei Ranges, the purchase of which was completed during the previous twelve months, was formally proclaimed during the year, and control vested in the Auckland City Council in accordance with the provisions of section 12 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1925. The reservation was also completed of the Waro limestone-rocks area referred to in the last report. Arrangements will shortly be made for the appointment of a local Scenic Board to control the reserve. Other reservations in North Auckland included those of some 359 acres of the Mangamuka West Block No. 3D, and of an area of 79 acres in Waipu Parish. The former comprises part of a chain of reserves it is hoped to establish on the route of the Mangamuka—Victoria Valley Road, while the latter includes an exceptionally fine limestone gorge along the Pohenui Stream. This gorge is richly forested, and, as Waipu can now be reached by a splendid road, the reservation that has been made should be greatly appreciated by all lovers of scenic beauty.

In the Auckland District an area of beautiful bush on the main Te Awamutu—Kawhia Road was acquired and reserved under the Act, while an addition was also made to the Mamaku Reserves.

An area of 25 acres of Native land in the Onaio Block, Gisborne District, was taken for scenic purposes during the year. The land is a narrow strip along the main road at Whitianga Bay, and contains some splendid bush.

Some interesting reservations were made in the Taranaki District. Section 167, Oakura district (known as Te Koru Pa) was proclaimed Crown land under the special provisions made in section 23 of the Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act, 1926, and thereupon became a scenic and historic reserve within the meaning of the Scenery Preservation Act. This area was a gift to the Crown from the Native owners, and control has been vested in the New Plymouth Scenic Reserves Board, which body already has supervision over many historic spots in Taranaki. The pa, which was at one time the headquarters of the Ngamahanga Hapu of the Taranaki Tribe, is situated in a horse-shoe bend of the Oakura River, and, apart from its historic interest, has long been held in high regard as a favourite picnicking-ground. It forms one of the very few remaining examples of a pa with stone-faced glacis or parapets surrounding the tiki or citadel. The narrow neck connecting the pa with the mainland was in the old days defended by a very deep trench backed by three terraces, all of which were faced with stone to a height of 15 ft. in places.

Another valuable reservation was of some 472 acres on the main Taumarunui—Ohura Road. The land is all forest-clad, and the greater part of the bush is visible from the Main Trunk line in the vicinity of Okahukura. It is stated that there is no other similar area of bush between Taumarunui and Ohura on the main road, and the reservation should therefore be greatly appreciated.

In the Marlborough District an area of 5 acres of virgin bush on Ohoka Island, in the Sounds district, was reserved, while a small area was added to the Pelorus Bridge Reserve.

An area of 291 acres adjoining the Ururakau Scenic Reserve, near Nelson, was reserved, and added to the area already controlled by the City Council as a special Scenic Board.

The acquisition of the Sugarloaf Reserve of 272 acres on the Port Hills was completed during the year, and control vested in the Summit Road Scenic Reserves Board. This reserve, the purchase of which was rendered possible mainly through the generosity of Messrs. J. J. Thomson and W. G. Jamieson, who each donated £500, and to the efforts of Mr. H. G. Ell, who initiated the proposal many years ago, will form a splendid addition to the magnificent chain of reserves on the Port Hills. A subsidy has been provided by Government towards the fencing of the land.

The total number of scenic reservations in the Dominion now stands at 777, covering an area of over 453,000 acres.

REVOCATION OF RESERVATIONS.

The reservation over the whole or parts of certain reserves was revoked during the year for various reasons. Of the cases dealt with the most important were those of the Peel Forest Reserve, Canterbury, and an area of 1,970 acres of the Rainbow Mountain Reserve, Auckland District. In the former case the reservation under the Scenery Preservation Act was cancelled by the Peel Forest Act, 1926, which set the land apart as the Peel Forest Park, and provided for its management by a special Board. In the latter case the reservation for scenic purposes over the greater part of the Rainbow Mountain Reserve was cancelled by section 5 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1926. The area in question had been for many years included within the boundaries of the Waiotapu Plantation, and had been completely planted over. It was not of any particular scenic interest, and under the circumstances it was deemed expedient to permanently set it apart for State Forest purposes. An area of 60 acres of the Waiotapu Scenic Reserve extension was also set apart as a State forest under somewhat similar circumstances. In this case the area in question had been regularly burnt over and maintained as a fire-control zone in order to safeguard the Waiotapu Plantation. It contained only a small portion of hot ground with a few boiling mudholes not of sufficient interest to be retained for scenic purposes, and having regard to its value for fire protection it was considered advisable to permanently reserve it for State-forest purposes. This matter was dealt with under section 6 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1926. A small portion of the Lake Ianthe Scenic Reserve, Westland, was set apart as a resting-place for travelling stock under section 24 of the same Act. The area so withdrawn from scenic reservation does not adjoin the lake itself, but is suitable for a stock reserve, which is very necessary in that locality. The other cases dealt with mostly concerned small areas where the bush had been destroyed, and nothing was to be gained by holding the land under reservation.