

An area of 61 acres in the Pakiri Valley containing a fine stand of young kauri and a small piece of bush at Lucas Creek completed the North Auckland reservations during the year under review.

Areas totalling nearly 3,000 acres in the Auckland Land District were dealt with during the year. The principal reservations comprised various areas of steep and precipitous bush-clad country on the Kiritehere-Waikawan-Awakino Road. This road, with its miles of bush-clad hills, affords a good opportunity of providing a valuable scenic route in the near future. A good road has been formed, and when the metalling has been completed it will give an all-weather road to Kawhia. An area of 709 acres of good mixed bush in the Awaroa Valley was also set aside in the Kawhia district. Other Auckland reservations included those of an area of 484 acres of heavy bush at Lake Rotoma, some 239 acres on the slopes of Ngongotaha Mountain, and 47 acres as an addition to the Wairere Falls Reserve. In the Lake Rotoma case the area dealt with contains some very fair milling-timber, and strong representations were made by interested parties that this should be made available. However, in accordance with the Department's policy of preserving bush areas of scenic value the representations were refused, and arrangements made to protect the bush by setting the land aside as a permanent reserve under the Scenery Preservation Act. The reserved area has a long frontage to the main Rotorua-Whakatane Road. The area of 47 acres at the Wairere Falls was made available by the State Forest Service for the purpose of improving the boundaries of the original scenic reserve which was set aside in 1908, and comprises a most acceptable addition to a valuable reserve. The Wairere Falls enjoy considerable popularity, and are well worth a visit. The following extract from the report of the District Surveyor who fixed the boundaries of the 1908 reserve may prove of interest:—

"The Wairere Stream takes its rise on an elevated tableland on the plateau on the main range stretching from Te Aroha to Mamaku. The falls commence where the stream at a height of 1,311 ft. above sea-level first plunges headlong over the side of a precipice in a sheer drop of about 300 ft.; a short distance further down there is another fall of 200 ft. and then a series of cascades and rapids, making a total descent of about 1,200 ft. At the time of my visit the weather had been fairly dry for some weeks, and there was a comparatively small amount of water going over the falls. However, in winter after heavy rain a magnificent body of water thunders over the falls, the roar of which can be heard for miles around, and the foaming waters can also be seen from the Rotorua Railway, which is eight miles distant at the nearest point. The gorge into which the waters make their giddy leap is covered with very pretty native bush, comprising rata, rimu, mahoe, tawa, pukatea, makomako, titoki, hinau, mapau, and tree-ferns, together with a wealth of minor shrubs, creepers, ferns, and mosses."

A recent description of the reserve is as follows:—

"The whole area of this reserve is completely clothed in native bush, with tawa predominating. The beautiful falls seem to be dropping over from the top of the range, having their origin in some mysterious source, as the huge basin in which the Wairere Stream rises is completely shut out from view when the falls are looked at from the western side of the range."

Only one reservation was made in the Gisborne Land District, the area dealt with being some 335 acres of steep and broken country at Waiawa. It is described as being without any doubt one of the finest pieces of native bush to be seen in either the Poverty Bay or Bay of Plenty districts.

In the Hawke's Bay Land District a small area of 1 rood 38 perches near Wairoa was set aside during the year for the purpose of preserving some particularly interesting vegetation thereon. The land was generously donated to the Crown by Mr. A. T. Carroll, and the Department has arranged to have it securely fenced. Two small areas of bush were also added to the Tongio Falls Scenic Reserve, on the main Napier-Gisborne Road.

Scenic reserves in the Taranaki Land District were increased by the setting-aside of an area of 64 acres on the Stony River near Okato, and an area of 6 acres on the Mataimaroke Road in the country behind Hawera. The Stony River area comprises a fine piece of bush running along the stream for more than two miles. It has been placed under the control of the Taranaki County Council, and arrangements are in hand to have the area completely fenced so as to give the bush the most adequate protection possible. In both cases the land was formerly State forest, and was handed over by the State Forest Service for reservation under the Scenery Preservation Act.

In the Wellington Land District an area of 113 acres of bush land adjoining the well-known Rongokaupo Hill Scenic Reserve at Ohakune was reserved during the year, and four small closed road areas intersecting that reserve were formally added thereto.

Reservations totalling 31,245 acres were carried out in the Nelson Land District. In the Lewis Pass locality along the recently constructed main highway between the West Coast and Canterbury an area of some 28,200 acres of provisional State forest and Crown land was declared to be scenic reserve by the passing of section 24 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1937. The scenic attractions of the locality are very marked, and the reservation made takes in the well-known Cannibal Gorge area. The view from the saddle along the bush-lined gorge, with snow-covered peaks in the distance, is a most striking one. An area of 1,965 acres of provisional State forest land in the Warbeck Valley was also handed over for reservation under the Scenery Preservation Act during the year. This area is all in bush and extends to the top of the ridge on each side of the West Coast Road for a distance of some miles. Other areas dealt with comprised some 110 acres of attractive bush at the source of the north branch of the Riwaka River; some 781 acres at the head of the Wairau Valley, on the Blenheim-West Coast Road; two areas in the Buller Gorge; and an area of 54 acres at the Kohika Lakes, Collingwood district.