

at the conclusion of an article on the subject, "The object that the Nelson Scenery Preservation Society has in view is an excellent one, and the locality they have selected as a site for a national park appears to be thoroughly suitable." With that we had good hopes that it would be warmly taken up in Blenheim; but, as it happened, there was considerable opposition on the part of Mr. Brownlee. We have no personal feeling against that gentleman, but he was a man of very considerable influence in that district, and his opposition took the form of a counter-petition, which received many names. But of the Blenheim people there are five hundred names on our own petition. Dr. Cleghorn, however, who represents Blenheim, is here, and will speak of the attitude of that town. The chief reason I give for making this reserve is that the block in question contains the finest untouched piece of timber remaining in Marlborough or Nelson. As the Committee know, the greater part of Marlborough is open sheep country without any bush on it. There was, further, a large stretch of bush in the Kaituna and Pelorus Valleys. Those two valleys were bought for sawmilling purposes and entirely denuded of bush; and the next piece of accessible untouched bush is half-way between Nelson and Blenheim. I should say there is a large quantity still, as I understand, up the Wakamarina Valleys and up the Pelorus. From a report made by the Surveyor-General, published by the Marlborough Land Board, and republished by the *Marlborough Observer*, I take the following extract: "(Question by the Chairman of the Land Board): You believe the timber would more than pay for the construction of a railway-line right up to the timber? (Hon. Mr. Cadman, in reply): Yes, three or four times over, for, at the lowest calculation, without going into details, the timber that is in the Rai Valley is only a small portion of the whole amount; there is a very large quantity of timber in the Wakamarina. I think there is at least £100,000 worth of royalties in that place, and in saying this I feel that I am within the mark." Under these circumstances we felt that there was a large quantity of timber, altogether outside that with which we were dealing. In the district to which I more particularly belong there was, in former years, a large quantity of timber in Nelson and in the Waimea Valley, and in the neighbouring districts. Now, the Waimea is practically denuded of timber; the Takaka Valley is also, to all purposes, cut out, and the Collingwood also is in a similar position. There is a large quantity of timber standing yet in the Nelson Province. Any one standing, say, on the Hope Saddle can see that is so; but it is out of reach, useless, and inaccessible. I have no doubt that the figures quoted by Mr. Mills, and given him by the Waste Lands Department, are perfectly correct; but that timber is useless for the purposes for which we wish the reserve to be made. In fact, there is timber on the Maungatapu and other mountains, but it is inaccessible, and useless for what we consider this reserve should be made. This particular piece we are considering, however, is a fine piece of land near the main coach-road, and is altogether useful for the purposes of a reserve. I do not know the area of this land, but it consists of two valleys bounded by two birch-clad hills. It will be practically secure from fire. The valleys are low and protected by the hills, and there is practically no possibility that it can be touched by fire. In this bush there are all kinds and varieties of native birds. The enormous number of tuis when I last went there was incredible. They live in this bush, and it is their home. The native pigeon resort there in great numbers; the crow, and all other birds driven from other districts of New Zealand are to be found there, and it is their home. Beside all these reasons it is known as one of the chief attractions of the Nelson Province for its beautiful scenery. We are a small place—our industries very small—and we must preserve what attractions we have. One of the greatest of these is natural scenery. The same applies to Blenheim. This, if reserved, would attract visitors from all parts of the colony. The Ronga Valley is, practically speaking, low, and communicates with the Croiselles Harbour. It is easily accessible from Nelson and Wellington. There is a road through from the Croiselles to the Pelorus *via* the Ronga. I have never been through, but I know it is a most beautiful country. The Opouri Valley communicates with the upper part of the Pelorus Sound. It is easily accessible from Wellington. If these valleys are left untouched they will be a playground to people from all parts of Nelson and New Zealand. I am sure, if the Committee will leave these lands reserved, the wisdom of it will be felt in less than twenty years by everybody in the colony. It is, of course, impossible that an effort of this sort should affect the interests of no one at all. Now, I have nothing to say against Mr. Brownlee, for I esteem his character; but I do say that the interests of the colony at large are larger than his, however enterprising he is. He puts down a tramway, believing he would have a monopoly of this timber. He has put down the tramway hoping, no doubt, that he would attach this large piece of bush at the end. He did this at his own risk, and I am sorry if he feels this proposed reservation can do any damage to him. As public men, however, we may not allow this valuable matter to drop. I know there is a valuable piece of timber there, and for that reason it ought to be reserved. With regard to the tramway, it is common knowledge that Mr. Brownlee has been trying to get the Government to buy it. I know Mr. Brownlee has large interests on the West Coast; and it would be exceedingly well for him if he could devote his energies to the other places where he is working. The timber is shipped from Havelock to other parts of New Zealand altogether, and it can be got from other places altogether. It cannot be taken overland, and the timber which comes to Blenheim comes by ship and by rail. I do not pose here as an expert in the matter of timber. I present myself as the chairman of this particular society, and I represent the views that govern us in that direction. We believe that for the sake of the temporary profit that can be made—and it is but temporary profit made out of the sale of this timber—it would be wrong for that reason to do that which can never be undone; and we think it would be a wrong to posterity. If the sawmill goes through that country there is an end to it, because the sawmill leaves the tops, and it is a matter of absolute certainty that the whole would be burnt out. We have seen it in our own district. Wherever there has been any felled piece of bush the fire has gone right through, and the destruction has been lamentable. We believe this portion of the virgin bush should be kept as a sanctuary for the flora and fauna of the country, not only for us but for the whole colony. I am not pleading this simply for a mere æsthetic concern; it has a real living