

Good work has been done by the resident caretakers on the Trounson Kauri Park Reserve and the Ball's Clearing Reserve at Puketitiri, Hawkes Bay, and by the ranger on Stewart Island.

GENERAL

There was practically no fire damage to reserves during the year, weather conditions in general being such as not to create any undue fire hazards.

Stock trespass is still a problem in many cases, but cannot be altogether overcome under existing conditions.

Various reports indicate concern at the increase of opossums in bush areas. This pest is most difficult to control.

The Cape Kidnapper Bird Sanctuary maintains its popularity with the general public. Reports indicate that the gannet colony was considerably larger than for many seasons past. One of the honorary rangers whose occupation enables him to make frequent visits to the sanctuary has been appointed honorary caretaker, and will attend to minor track and fence repairs, &c., and generally maintain the public utilities provided in the Rest Hut area. During the year a telephone was installed at the residence of the caretaker of the Clifton Domain, who is also an honorary ranger of the sanctuary. This should prove most useful in the event of any mishap to visitors, and in checking vandalism and trespass by unauthorized persons on the sanctuary area.

A firebreak has been constructed along the road boundary and part of the northern and southern boundaries of the Ball's Clearing Reserve at Puketitiri.

The New Plymouth Scenic Reserves Board has in hand the establishment of a special kauri park as a memorial to the late William Henry Skinner, a former officer of the Lands Department and a recognized authority on old Taranaki.

Grants were made to various Scenic Boards for improvements to the reserves under their control. Further amenities have been provided at the Lake Kaniere and Lake Mahinapua Reserves near Hokitika. Large numbers of visitors patronize these easily-accessible reserves, particularly during the summer months, and some of the reserves in Marlborough on which camping amenities have been provided are also exceedingly popular with the general public. Reserves controlled by Scenic Boards and local authorities have generally been fairly well maintained, and it seems that where there is a measure of local control the public is more inclined to assist in the preservation and improvement of the reserves and to better appreciate their value.

A long-term plan of planting and other work to safeguard Trounson Park from fire and to protect the reserve from damage by gales has been adopted. The ultimate objectives are to bring the supervision of the park within the reasonable capacity of the resident caretaker by reducing all possible fire hazards to a minimum, and over a term of many years to gradually replace all exotics with indigenous species. It is proposed to grass down and maintain closely grazed a strip of at least 3 chains in width around the boundaries wherever there is any risk of fire from adjoining properties now in fern and scrub, or from passers-by on the public roads. The Trounson Kauri Park Rural Fire District has, by arrangement with the State Forest Service, been enlarged and reconstituted under the Forest and Rural Fires Act, 1947; an appeal has been made to adjoining owners for full co-operation in fire-protection measures; and close contact between the caretaker and the State Forest staff at Waipoua has been arranged for by telephone.

Applications are occasionally made to the Department for the granting of permission for the milling of green timber on scenic-reserve land. Such applications are invariably declined, as scenic reserves of bush land are set apart for the preservation of the forest and not as sources of supply of timber.