

THE PROPOSED NEW BOUNDARIES.

At first sight the additional areas may appear very considerable, but in our opinion, if the park is to be more than merely a collection of barren scorice-slopes, interesting as they are (since the volcanoes are still active), the ground to be included is by no means too great. We have already explained fully the principles which have guided us in our recommendation—viz., (1) the addition to the park of examples of all the special plant associations of the region, since it is on these that the unique character of the scenery depends; (2) the exclusion of all land suitable for agriculture, and of forests containing milling-timber. Therefore, large as the proposed area undoubtedly is, no one can object to the size on economic grounds. Further, these have also been attended to in our third principle, the retention of the forest covering on the slopes liable to denudation, as a protection for the farms of the future.

It will be seen that certain areas proposed to be included in the park are either Maori or private lands. We would urge that provision be made for the acquisition of such. In case this cannot be, then, where such lands occur, the former boundaries of the park could still continue. This, however, in the case of the forest covering of the Ruapehu spurs would much detract from the value of the new boundaries from the climatic standpoint.

THE BIRD-LIFE.

Wherever forest exists, there the remarkable bird-life of New Zealand is preserved. In the forests of the proposed new boundaries are large flocks of whiteheads and parrakeets, wrens in abundance, wekas, a few kiwis, plenty of tuis, many kakas, pigeons, moreporks, fantails, tomtits (possibly the huia), cuckoos of both species, and in the loose *débris* of river-terraces and lava-slopes mutton-birds nest abundantly.

As for other animals, there is a rich field for the entomologist, the shrubberies and forests preserving many forms of the invertebrata, whose presence and, indeed, existence is dependent on the shade and shelter these arborescent associations afford.

SOME GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

At the present time the Tongariro National Park is quite unprotected from damage. Fires are lit with impunity within its precincts, animals roam at large destroying the vegetation, and the huts for visitors are occasionally damaged by those who benefit by them. As the number of visitors to the park will certainly much increase upon its attractions becoming better known, it seems very necessary that immediate steps should be taken for its protection. We would therefore suggest that a caretaker, who would be *ex officio* a constable, be appointed. Such a man might reside at the Ruapehu Mountain House, an extra room or two being provided. At present it contains two small rooms, fitted with three and two bunks respectively, while in the larger room is a fireplace. There is no table or furniture of any kind. The caretaker might supplement his salary by acting as guide and by providing food and bedding for visitors, just as is done at the Mountain Houses at Mount Egmont. Also, were such a caretaker appointed, a charge could be made for occupying the huts. His duties, of course, would be such as the Board would decide upon, but it would be necessary for him to visit at no long lapses of time those portions of the park easy of access to the public.

At the present time there is no accommodation for horses at either of the Mountain Houses. It is very necessary indeed that paddocks should be fenced off, and sown with white clover and cocksfoot. The difficulty of keeping horses at Ruapehu without a paddock was one which we strongly experienced.

We would also suggest that notices *re* damage to plants, lighting fires, &c. (more forcibly worded and of larger size and type than those used at present), should be placed in as many conspicuous places in and near the park as possible, and the same might be posted up in such other public places (post-offices, railway-stations, &c.) in the neighbourhood of the park as might call attention to the importance of its protection.

A most important and interesting feature of the park are the hot springs at Ketetahi, on Tongariro. They still, however, belong to the Natives. Their waters differ considerably in character. They are considered by the Natives as remedies for various diseases, and this fact is also mentioned by Hochstetter, page 377. Being situated at more than 4,000 ft. altitude, the climate would also be of distinct value for many complaints. At present the bathing accommodation is of the most primitive kind: a hole in the creek is dammed up, and in this the bather sits in the mud. The hut is almost a mile by road from the springs, but it could be brought to within a few minutes' walk by an easily made track over the adjacent tussock land. Also, this hut offers even poorer accommodation than the one on Ruapehu, there being no fireplace, a kind of kitchen with an abnormally small fireplace having been constructed near the adjacent creek. We do not offer any suggestions, but merely refer to the matter of Ketetahi since, for obvious reasons, it may finally become a place of prime importance.

So far as tracks are concerned, there will shortly be a good track from Ketetahi and Roto Aira to the Ruapehu House. A track also leads on to the lower spurs of Ruapehu, but it is finally ill defined, and it is especially important that it should be continued, and stones or poles placed to indicate the final spur by which the northern (Te Heuheu) peak should be climbed.

The track by the Wangaehu might also with advantage be marked, and, as suggested before, a track cut and perhaps a hut erected for the Rangataua route *via* the bank of the Mangaehu River.