

## INSPECTIONS.

From the visits paid by the Inspector of Scenic Reserves to many of the areas under his supervision, it is gratifying to know that they are all in pretty good condition, are very little infested with noxious weeds, and have in no way been detrimentally affected by the periodical fires that occur, particularly in the North Island. His report appears in Appendix B.

## MOKAU RIVER.

It has been the custom each year to devote a special article to a scenic resort in the Dominion. In the report of 1906-7 a full account (illustrated by photographs and plans) of the North Island Main Trunk Railway route was given, and the public and all concerned were thus made fully aware of intended reservations. In the ensuing year (1907-8) a similar account was given of the Wanganui River scenic proposals between Taumarunui and Wanganui; and from time to time these recommendations are given effect to. This year an interesting account of the Mokau River scenery is given by the Secretary of the Board (Mr. W. R. Jourdain), (*vide* Appendix D); and its perusal, together with an inspection of the photographs and plans that accompany it, will show that, though this charming river has not in the past been much visited, and is not nearly so well known as the Wanganui, yet there is not much doubt that in future, when better accommodation and means of access are provided, it will rank second to none as a scenic resort.

## INQUIRY UNDER THE PUBLIC WORKS ACT.

In giving effect to the recommendations of the Scenery Preservation Board as to the acquisition of Native lands on the Wanganui River bank, it was necessary to acquire several areas of land near Galatea and Athens. Due notice having been served upon the owners and lessees of these lands, objections to the taking were raised by some of the lessees affected, and an inquiry under the Public Works Act was demanded. This was agreed to by the Minister of Public Works, who directed the Stipendiary Magistrate at Wanganui, Mr. R. L. Stanford, to hold it. The Department was represented by the Crown Prosecutor at Wanganui (Mr. Clifford Marshall) and the Secretary of the Scenery Preservation Board; and, after hearing their explanation of the reasons for taking the land, and the legal position of the matter, together with the evidence of the counsel and witnesses who objected to the taking, the Magistrate reported that no case whatever had been made out against the taking of the land, which was strictly in accordance with the law, and that "none of the objections by either objectors showed any private injury done by the taking of the said land for which due compensation is not provided by the said Act."

## GENERAL.

It is hoped to continue during the current year the surveys of the North Island Main Trunk Railway route and the Wanganui River bank scenic reserves, and, if satisfactory progress can be made with their reservation, other important localities will be similarly dealt with, and the most pressing needs of scenery-preservation will then be satisfactorily provided for.

It has been repeatedly asserted, and it is widely believed, that isolated clumps of native bush, or even long strips of the same, will not survive for many years when the surrounding country is all cleared, and numerous examples are quoted of settlers who have tried to preserve small areas of bush on their holdings, mainly *for the purpose of affording shelter for their stock*, and how the bush has gradually disappeared. It is well to explain once more why such areas never survive. It invariably happens that in these cases stock are allowed free access to the bush, with the inevitable result that the undergrowth is either eaten or trampled down; then the bleak winds sweep through unrestrained, and the bush dies out. But over and over again, when the bush is securely fenced off so that the undergrowth and young scrub can grow up, the trees have been preserved, and after twenty years of exposure in open country are a standing monument of what care and forethought will do.