

Areas on the banks of the Wanganui River have been surveyed, and are now being taken for scenic purposes, and land along the Pipiriki-Raetihi Road has been acquired from the Maori District Land Board, as has also a fine area overlooking Ohakune, both of which reserves will appear in next year's schedules. A number of scenic areas in the Westland District are also being reserved, the lands being the property of the Crown, and comprising picturesque forest scenery either on the shores of lakes, the banks of rivers, or along the ranges. Many other scattered areas in various parts of the Dominion are also being dealt with as opportunity offers. The claims of settlement are, however, invariably respected, and land well adapted for close settlement is rarely taken.

#### EXPENDITURE DURING YEAR.

The expenditure during the year showed a considerable decrease on the money spent during the preceding twelve months, only £3,730 being expended, as against £5,775. Of the amount expended, over £600 was for the fencing of reserves and eradication of noxious weeds, whilst the surveys and valuations of lands accounted for over £1,500. As the area of scenic reserves increases, the annual cost of protection and administration is necessarily greater, but the value of the scenery safeguarded grows correspondingly, and it may be well to repeat once more that the reserves contain scenery unique in its way, and of a nature that cannot be paralleled throughout the wide world. As time goes on the reserves will be more and more appreciated, and the annual expenditure is well within reasonable limits. Office-expenses are almost nil; the Board's expenses were trifling; and the following table shows in a comprehensive form the chief items of expenditure since the passing of the Scenery Preservation Act of 1903, and the formation of the Scenery Preservation Fund of £100,000, of which nearly £63,000 is still unexpended.

#### Comparison of Expenditure.

	1904-5.	1905-6.	1906-7.	1907-8.	1908-9.	1909-10.	1910-11.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Compensation for land ...	216	3,336	7,856	4,286	3,813	1,688	1,066
Expenses of Commission and Board ...	1,822	1,221	185	86	24	...	11
Salaries of officers ...	...	...	...	175	325	325	325
Fencing and maintenance ...	...	...	304	382	1,063	1,159	685
Miscellaneous (surveys, valuations, &c.) ...	52	527	801	555	540	2,603	1,643
Totals ...	2,090	5,084	9,146	5,484	5,765	5,775	3,730

#### GENERAL.

The Northcote Scenic Reserve, towards the purchase of which a small sum was contributed by the residents, has been placed under the control of the Northcote Borough Council, and in other cases where a local body is in a position to superintend or act as caretaker of scenic reserves, and is willing to do so, it may be advisable to grant them the necessary authority.

It may be of interest to point out that by virtue of past legislation all scenic reserves and national parks in New Zealand are practically sanctuaries for the Native birds and game, and no shooting or killing whatever is permitted on them. The greatest care is taken to keep them free from noxious weeds, and wherever practicable and advisable the fencing of the external boundaries has been proceeded with, particularly when the reserve adjoins settled land or a road in general use. The Inspector was partly engaged in surveying operations during the year, but he has inspected most of the scenic reserves in the Dominion, and will now complete the remaining inspections, whilst the Crown Lands Rangers and other officers of the Department of Lands are also available for isolated cases or in any urgent matter. The Inspector's report will be found in Appendix B. and shows the scope of his duties in connection with scenic reserves.

The report of the Scenery Preservation Board appears in Appendix C. and contains a list of the meetings during the twelve months. It will be seen that most of its meetings are held in Wellington; but where the Board deems it necessary to specially visit and inspect areas recommended for acquisition, the meeting is usually held at the land office for the district. This only took place twice during 1910-11.

In conclusion, I have to state that great economy is exercised in the administration of the Act, and, since the Department of Lands has had the control of scenery-preservation, the expenditure on office-administration and Board's meetings has been so small as not to amount to 1 per cent. of total expenditure, whilst the annual salaries during the past four years only amount to 4 per cent. The interests of scenery-preservation have been studied closely, and it may confidently be stated that the Dominion has obtained splendid value for the expenditure incurred.