

EXPENDITURE DURING YEAR.

For the twelve months ended 31st March, 1912, the expenditure out of the scenery-preservation vote was £5,938 16s. 5d., or £2,208 more than the preceding year. A perusal of the statement of accounts discloses the fact that a large proportion of the expenditure was necessitated by the surveys and valuations of the land taken for scenic purposes, no less than £1,167 representing the survey of lands on the Mokau River banks. Such expenditure, however, is more than repaid by the acquisition of the magnificent scenery so surveyed, and when the difficulties of working in the rough and forest-clad country invariably selected for scenic purposes is considered, the remoteness of the lands from centres of population, together with difficulties of access, it will be recognized that the preliminary expenditure incurred in acquiring scenic reserves is more than justified by the circumstances of the case. The following table shows in a succinct form the expenditure, under the chief heads, since the passing of the Scenery Preservation Act, 1903 :—

Comparison of Expenditure.

Year.	Compensation for Land.	Fencing and Maintenance.	Surveys, Valuations, &c.	Board's Expenses.	Salaries.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
1904-5	216	Nil	52	1,822	*	2,090
1905-6	3,336	„	527	1,221	*	5,084
1906-7	7,856	304	801	185	*	9,146
1907-8	4,286	382	555	86	175	5,484
1908-9	3,813	1,063	540	24	325	5,765
1909-10	1,688	1,159	2,603	Nil	325	5,775
1910-11	1,066	685	1,643	11	325	3,730
1911-12	2,619	715	2,237	22	345	5,938
Grand total						43,012

* Included in Board's expenses.

The Scenery Preservation Act, 1903, consolidated in the Act of 1908, provided a total sum of £100,000 for the purposes of the Act. Each year a certain portion of this amount is appropriated by Parliament and authorized for expenditure. It will therefore be seen that a balance of £56,988 remains available for future appropriations under the Scenery Preservation Act. As already stated, an area of 159,808 acres is reserved under the Act. These lands require periodical inspection, eradication of noxious weeds, fencing, and otherwise attending to, and the annual cost of maintenance and administration is a constant charge upon the vote.

SCENIC BOARDS.

Section 13 of the Scenery Preservation Act, 1908, authorizes the Governor to vest the control of any reserve in any local authority or special Board, upon such trusts and conditions as are prescribed. Advantage has been taken of this provision in the following cases :—

Kennedy's Bush, Christchurch : Vested in a special Board composed of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, and five gentlemen resident in the locality. Three years from the 2nd September, 1911.

Summit Road Reserves, Christchurch : Vested in a similar Board for three years from the 22nd September, 1911.

Signal Hill (Burns Park), Dunedin : Vested in a special Board composed of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Dunedin, and five gentlemen resident in the locality. This Board expired by effluxion of time in January, 1912.

Northcote Scenic Reserve : Vested in the Northcote Borough Council for three years from the 23rd January, 1911.

Other reserves are also proposed to be vested in special Boards, as circumstances warrant such action being taken.

GENERAL REMARKS.

On the whole, the past year has been a distinctly satisfactory one. A large area of land has been acquired and reserved; the expenses have not been more than the average; there has been a conspicuous absence of fires in the reserves; much unique scenery has been surveyed for reservation and will soon be gazetted; a sympathetic interest is being taken in the work of scenery-preservation, and the public are gradually realizing that it is in their own interests that the work is being carried on; and there is every prospect that in the near future the inhabitants of New Zealand, as well as visitors (both scientific and pleasure-seeking), will recognize that in the extensive and varied scenery of the Dominion there exists a vast and valuable heritage that is paralleled in very few countries and surpassed in none.

Attached to this report are the following appendices :—

- A. Schedule of reserves made during year, accompanied by a statement of accounts.
- B. Report of the Inspector of Scenic Reserves.
- Report of the Caretaker of Reserves in Queen Charlotte Sound.
- C. Report of the Scenery Preservation Board.