

As is well known, red-beech in the Waimarino, Ruahine Ranges, and in the South Island is a timber of great durability; but in the Mokau it seems to be durable only when under water or in the tunnel of the coal-mine. There are very divergent views as to the durability of red-beech. In some districts its durability has been proved beyond doubt; but in other districts the timber is not durable in contact with the ground. Granting its durability, it can never be of use for important structural purposes, as it has (as experience up to now has proved) an incorrigible tendency to crack and warp very badly.

General Observations.

We New-Zealanders often boast that we lead the world in "advanced legislation," but the following facts will show that in the matter of scenery-preservation there are other countries that equal if not surpass us. In Germany maps are made showing limits of certain botanical species, birds, and animals; also interesting rocks, or historical buildings, &c. Certain rare plants are by law not allowed to be picked or offered for sale; certain birds and animals are protected by law; a wood in Münster is not allowed to be cut, in order to preserve certain rare lichens growing on the trees; certain very old trees are protected for students of the drawing academy at Hanau; quarrying has been prohibited in many places, as it destroyed some cliff scenery, interesting rock-formation, or moraine; even bogs are preserved for their interesting plant-formation. Reserves are made in all German African colonies. Sweden has now got an Act by which land can be taken compulsorily for scenery-preservation. In Arizona the celebrated silicified forest has been taken over by the State to prevent its gradual destruction by being made into art objects. Not far from London (he who objects to scenic, &c., reservations should note well) the Selborne Society has purchased and reserved a wood as a sanctuary for birds; in this wood the birds are so tame that the keeper handles them and their young ones when in the nest. The birds, having learnt that here man is not a relentless destroyer, but a friend, have come in hundreds.

Following the example set in Germany, is it not time that the quarrying of the interesting volcanic cones about Auckland was stopped? These volcanoes are the second factor in the unique beauty of Auckland and its environs, yet they are being rapidly cut into every year in order to get ballast for the railway and metal for the roads. There are millions of tons of vesicular basalt in the fields around Auckland which makes a far better road-material than the scoria of the cones.

There are gratifying indications that there is a growing appreciation of native plants. Many private gardens that have been laid out during the last few years contain many specimens from our bush. I am frequently asked to (and, when possible, do) get people plants or seeds to put in their gardens. I have even had requests from England and Ireland. Borough Councils in planting town reserves generally have many native trees and shrubs put in.

There are several forest reserves from north to south of the Dominion that contain no timber of milling value, such of these as are in poor hilly country unsuitable for settlement it would be as well to convert into scenic reserves. It seems advisable, too, that all scenic reserves that have been made under the Land Act should be catalogued and all brought under the Scenery Preservation Act. Strictly, my superintendence does not extend to the many scenic reserves under the Land Act, or to forest reserves, or national parks. In a scenic reserve made under the Scenery Preservation Act all purposes are combined: it is a forest reserve, a bird sanctuary, a climatic reserve, and a pleasure resort; and moneys from the scenery-preservation vote can be expended on it for fencing, eradication of noxious weeds, planting, and supervision. Many sportsmen ask me if they are allowed to take imported game on our national parks. Were permission given to do this it is probable that some would be tempted to shoot our protected indigenous birds. In some of our parks in which deer have been liberated they are likely to become so numerous that shooting may have to be allowed. It may, perhaps, be advisable to make some new reserves on which imported game could be put for sporting purposes. There are many practically waste tracts in both the North and South Island.

Now that whaling-stations are going to be established in Stewart Island it will be necessary for our representatives there to keep a sharp lookout, as in the past whalers have proved to be great destroyers of bush and native game.

With a view to spreading a knowledge of the penalty for interfering in any way with a scenic reserve, notices have been printed suitable for putting up at such places as stopping-places of steamers, railway-stations, post-offices, schools, &c.

It is pleasing to find that the Education Department, through its *School Journal*, is doing its share towards training our young people to take an interest and (I hope) pride in the beauties that have been so richly bestowed on this land. If (as the sociologist maintains) squalid surroundings produce low ideas, then is the converse true that beautiful surroundings produce beautiful and noble ideas.

E. PHILLIPS TURNER,

Inspector of Scenic Reserves.

REPORT ON KAPITI ISLAND.

In January I made a special inspection of Kapiti Island. As I have already reported, I do not advise the leasing of the grassed and partially grassed portions of this reserve. These parts are most irregular in shape, so that to fence them off would be most costly, and to leave them unfenced would mean that stock would invade the bush, which would be highly detrimental to its well-being. A great deal of the grassed land has so gone back that (if not again fired) it would take comparatively only a few years to become reforested. This end could be hastened if seeds of such trees as karaka, titoki, rata, houhou, ngaio, wharangi, rangiora, pohutukawa, and akeake were sown among the tauhinu. Seedlings of such trees as already grow on the island could also at small cost be planted in the more sheltered sites. A few weed-pests are present on this island, and they should be eradicated before they spread and become a serious nuisance.