

APPENDIX C.

REPORT OF THE SCENERY PRESERVATION BOARD.

DURING the year ended the 31st March, 1915, the following meetings of the Board were held: On the 18th May, 1914, to deal with lands in the Otago District; on the same date, to deal with lands in the Westland District; on the same date, to deal with lands in the Canterbury District; on the same date, to deal with lands in the Hawke's Bay District; on the same date, to deal with lands in the Southland District; on the 23rd June, 1914, to deal with lands in the Auckland District; on the 14th July, 1914, to deal with lands in the Wellington District; on the 20th July, 1914, to deal with lands in the Nelson District; on the 11th August, 1914, to deal with lands in the Taranaki District; on the 9th March, 1915, to deal with lands in the Canterbury District; and on the 29th March, 1915, to deal with lands in the Hawke's Bay District. All of the above meetings were held at the office of the Surveyor-General, Wellington; and the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the district in which were situated the lands dealt with attended the meeting of the Board in each case.

Forty-six recommendations were made by the Board and submitted to His Excellency the Governor for consideration. Many of them have since been given effect to, and others are still being dealt with. As has always been the case, the greatest care has been taken by the Board to ensure that land suitable for settlement is not recommended for reservation except in small areas, and when the circumstances of the case necessitated such action being taken. Mostly, the land recommended comprised hilly forest country more or less remote from centres of population, and not only suitable for scenic reservation, but also valuable for preservation in a state of nature owing to the needs of water-conservation and the prevention of the denudation of the soil. The retention of the majority of the lands reserved greatly benefits agriculture and the pastoral industries by preserving the bush along streams and rivers, and to a large extent preventing their silting up, as it is very essential to retain the natural cover at the headwaters and on the banks of many of the streams of the Dominion so that heavy rainfalls may not bring down soil from the steep hillsides.

Another class of land recommended for reservation is comprised in lands situated near towns and cities, often belonging to private persons, where it is desirable to acquire and retain specimens of the native flora in proximity to centres of population. In many cases assistance to this desirable object is given to the public and local bodies, and every endeavour has been made, where advisable, to preserve suitable and sufficient areas for the benefit of townspeople. Two well-known instances of this may be mentioned, one being the popular Day's Bay bush, situated on Wellington Harbour, where the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Act assisted the Wellington City Council in obtaining a magnificent playground for the people, and the other being areas of land along the Summit Road, from the Port Hills, Lyttelton, towards Banks Peninsula, where the public have for some years past assisted to secure several sites from which magnificent views of the surrounding scenery are obtainable.

Since the formation of the Board under the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Act, 1906, it has submitted four hundred recommendations for the setting-aside of land under the Act; and a glance at the various reserves that have been made in consequence thereof will show that the views and suggestions of the Board have met with most favourable consideration, and have been given effect to as far as has been found practicable.

E. H. WILMOT,
Chairman of Board.

REPORT OF SUMMIT ROAD SCENIC BOARD.

The above Board and Kennedy's Bush Board were amalgamated by notification in the *New Zealand Gazette* dated the 1st October, 1914, the first meeting of the Board being fixed for the 3rd November, 1914.

The area administered by both Boards on the 31st March, 1914, was 208 acres. This area has been increased by 114 acres by gift and exchange, the donors being Messrs. R. M. D. Morten, 37 acres, Ahuriri Bush, and R. H. Rhodes, 7 acres, Cass Peak; Mr. A. E. G. Rhodes paid £50 towards the purchase of 12 acres, Gravenor Bush; 29 acres were purchased from Messrs. McDonald and Gibson; and 39 acres by exchange between the Hon. R. H. Rhodes and the Crown. All these areas have been gazetted as scenic reserves and placed under the control of the Board, the area now totalling 322 acres.

The sum of £24 3s. 6d. has been expended on the fencing-in of Gravenor Bush; and Mr. H. Blyth, of Ata-ahua, has been appointed honorary caretaker. The sum of £59 19s. 2d. has been expended on fencing the Hoon Hay Reserves, which enabled them to be let to bring in some revenue.

All the reserves are securely fenced. The only patch of blackberry in the Ahuriri Bush Reserve has been removed. From the Kennedy's Bush Reserve a considerable quantity of elderberry has been cut out, through a kind donation of £10 by the Hon. R. H. Rhodes. All the areas of bush upon the different reserves are in a state of preservation. Bird-life is plentiful. The reserves are regularly visited by the caretaker, who is resident at Kennedy's Bush. Enlarged accommodation was very much needed at Kennedy's Bush to provide for an increasing number of visitors. Through a donation of £100 by Mr. Andrew Fairburn, of Christchurch, on which the Government granted a subsidy of £1 for £1, and a donation of £10 10s. by Mr. A. G. Allom, an accommodation-room has been provided, a large kitchen erected, and the house connected with the drainage system. The growth of noxious weeds is being kept well in hand.