

WANGANUI RIVER RESERVES COMMISSION.

A matter of interest in connection with the subject of scenery-preservation was the setting-up of a Commission at the desire of the Natives to investigate and report upon the Wanganui River scenic and other reserves. It consisted of Messrs. T. A. Duncan, of Hunterville (Chairman), E. Phillips Turner, F.R.G.S. (Inspector of Scenic Reserves), and Hikaka Takirau, of Oeo, Taranaki, with Mr. S. Gambrill as secretary.

The Commission viewed the whole of the reserves from the mouth of the river to Taumarunui, and met the Natives and other interested persons at various places to take evidence so as to enable all owners of land affected to state their views. The report of the Commission, which contains proposals to amend the boundaries of many of the reserves, is now receiving the consideration of the Government, and no doubt if the recommendations of the Commission are carried out the objections raised by the Natives will be largely removed.

INSPECTION OF SCENIC RESERVES.

Wherever possible honorary Inspectors are being appointed to look after reserves in their locality, so as to prevent the lighting of fires and other acts leading to destruction of the bush and scenery. It is often difficult to find suitable men with sufficient interest in the question of preserving the scenery of this Dominion to undertake the duties. It is, however, pleasant to be able to place on record the names of the following gentlemen who have kindly undertaken to accept duties as honorary Inspectors, and have been appointed by His Excellency the Governor to such positions: Arthur Hunt (Paraparaumu Reserve); D. S. Hingston (Awahuri Road Reserve, Feilding); J. D. Henderson (Kenepuru Sound reserves); Fredrick Archer, jun. (Tennyson Inlet reserves); H. C. Christian (Pelorus Sound, Ynecya, and North-west Bay reserves); Norman Christie (Ohakune scenic reserves); W. T. Webber (D'Urville Island reserves); William Cobeldick (Ngongotaha Mountain, Rotorua); Richard Casey (Claremont Settlement Reserve, Canterbury).

It is hoped that the services of other gentlemen will be secured from time to time to undertake similar duties over reserves in other parts of the Dominion.

In addition to these gentlemen Scenic Boards exercise supervision over reserves in many localities, such as Summit Road (Christchurch), New Plymouth, &c., the reports of such Boards appearing in Appendix C.

EXPENDITURE.

The expenditure during the year was smaller than it has been since the passing of the Act, only £1,555 having been spent, out of which the acquisition of lands amounted to £252, and grants to the Summit Road Scenic Board and the erection of caretaker's cottage in the Kaituna Valley amounted to £538.

By a reference to the appended table it will be seen that out of the £100,000 authorized to be expended under the Scenery Preservation Act there still remains a balance of £14,966 available for future voting by Parliament. As was the case during the preceding twelve months, every care was taken to curtail every unnecessary expenditure.

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
1912-13	12,997	798	2,697	6	345	16,843
1913-14	10,467	627	1,547	3	365	13,009
1914-15	6,253	758	476	12	388	7,887
1915-16	1,530	698	104	6	390	2,728
1916-17	252	836	76	1	390	1,555
Grand total						£85,034

* Included in Board's expenses.