

In addition, a special meeting was held on the 9th January, 1923, to consider the reservation of forest-covered areas in the upper reaches of the Wanganui River, at which were present the Surveyor-General (Chairman); the Under-Secretary, Native Department; the General Manager, Tourist Department; the Commissioners of Crown Lands, Auckland, Taranaki, and Wellington Districts; together with the Director of Forestry and the Secretary, State Forest Service. Valuable recommendations were made by the Board, after full discussion of the whole of the circumstances.

During the year nine recommendations were submitted by the Board to His Excellency the Governor-General regarding the acquisition and reservation of lands for scenic purposes throughout the Dominion.

It may be pointed out that for many years, on account of financial stringency, the Board has refrained from personally inspecting lands suggested as suitable for reservation under the Act, and has based its recommendations solely upon the reports furnished by the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the district and his officers. Whilst these reports are admitted to be very reliable, it is undoubtedly desirable that the Board should itself inspect areas when large questions are involved. This was done in former years when reservations were recommended along the North Island Main Trunk Railway line, the Wanganui River, Marlborough Sounds, Mokau River, &c., and the practice might be continued in the future when circumstances justify such action.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the Board uses its utmost endeavours to ensure that the lands recommended for acquisition are well worthy of permanent preservation.

W. T. NEILL, Chairman.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF LOCAL SCENIC BOARDS.

Summit Road Scenic Reserves Board (Christchurch).

The general condition of the reserves is very good. There is no evidence of the bush dying out—indeed, the reverse is the case, as where the reserves are fenced against trespass by cattle the bush is spreading. Seedlings are very numerous, which shows that under proper care against the trespass of cattle, and the prevention of fires, native bush thrives and spreads, notwithstanding the fact that the area may be quite small. This is particularly evidenced by the fact that Kennedy's Bush, which is only the remnant of a once large area, is not only in a flourishing condition, but seedlings can be counted by the thousand. Mr. Ell is confident that, providing fires can be kept out and the reserve so fenced as to keep rabbits out, and providing no grazing is allowed of any description, this bush in twenty-five years will spread over the whole gully. When the bush returns there is little doubt that the bird-life will become more plentiful. The observations made herein referring to Kennedy's Bush apply with equal force to the other reserves under control of the Board.

One urgent need at the present time is the fencing of all the reserves. The Board is not at present in a position to do this, but as its financial position improves this work will be undertaken. The following reserves are unfenced: The Major's Scenic Reserve; Mount Pleasant; Mount Cavendish; Witch Hill; Coronation Hill; Reserve No. 3064; Reserve No. 3002; the three reserves on Mount Sinclair; Mount Fitzgerald, and the reserve on south-western slope of Mount Fitzgerald; possibly, also, Knight's Bush, proposed to be acquired. Parkinson's Bush should be fenced at the earliest possible date. It is considered by Mr. Ell that the last two reserves can be developed into a valuable native-bird sanctuary. He is also very confident of importing other birds into the sanctuary, providing all grazing is put a stop to and a resident caretaker can be found to look after the place. He has already received offers of assistance in connection with the transport of native birds from other parts. With the growth of the bush on the lower levels of these two reserves there will be provided not only shelter but food. There is no resident caretaker at Kaituna, but there is one at Kennedy's Bush, who is also responsible for the care of Cooper's Knobs and Ahuriri Bush Reserves.

Mr. Ell has been working for many years to secure Sugarloaf Hill, which is directly opposite, and has been for some time in communication with the Minister of Lands about the completion of the purchase of this fine hill for the benefit of the public. A Government subsidy of £250 a year for two years has been approved on condition that the public find £250 a year for two years. Upon receipt of this information Mr. Ell immediately entered upon a canvass to collect the £250 for the first year, and he is meeting with very good success and is quite confident of collecting the amount required. The money collected he is paying into the Bank of New Zealand to the credit of two trustees—Mr. David Bates, who is a member of the Board, and Mr. J. L. Scarwell, a well-known Christchurch citizen. Subsequently at the meeting of the Board it was announced by Mr. G. Harper, solicitor, one of the Board members, that he had received a communication from two gentlemen resident in the district that they had each decided to donate £500 towards the purchase of the reserve. These very generous donations, together with money in hand and the Government subsidy, should enable the Board to carry out the purchase and perhaps complete the erection of a rabbit-proof fence round the reserve, the erection of which was a condition of the sale. It is hoped to do something towards planting the land with suitable native plants, and the fencing will help to protect these. The Board's main source of income has been derived from the "Sign of the Kiwi."

The public of Christchurch and Canterbury should be very grateful to Mr. J. Cracroft Wilson for the very generous reduction in the price of Sugarloaf Hill which he has made.

Interest in the overdraft incurred by the Summit Road Association has been met, and £50 paid off the principal. It is hoped that in the future payments in reduction of the overdraft can be made at a greater rate, so as to relieve the gentlemen concerned of the liability so generously guaranteed by them.

G. H. BULLARD, Chairman.