

to the district. The County Council is the sponsor of a scheme having for its object the sale of the six reserves referred to above to assist in the purchase of a suitable public domain for the district. The intention is to raise a special loan to pay for the land it is proposed to acquire, and to use the moneys obtained from the sale of the six reserves towards redeeming the loan. The land when acquired will be vested in the Crown as a public domain. The proposal to sell the reserves was fully advertised in the Christchurch papers, and no objections were received. The special legislation gave authority for the sale of the reserves, and for the proceeds to be paid to the County Council towards the redemption of the loan to be raised.

PART II.—NATIONAL PARKS.

No new parks were constituted during the year, but extensive additions were made to the Sounds or Fiordland National Park.

An area of 2,600 acres situated on the western side of the Waiau River between Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri was set apart for national-park purposes, in order that all the land on the western side of the river in that locality might be administered under the one form of reservation. The area dealt with comprised 1,900 acres of provisional State forest, 160 acres of scenic reserve, and 540 acres of ordinary Crown land. Special legislation was provided to deal with the provisional State forest and scenic reserve areas, and the State Forest Service readily agreed so far as their reserve was concerned.

The opening-up to motor traffic of the Te Anau - Milford Sound Road as so far constructed raised serious problems in connection with the safeguarding of the bush from fires and the control of camping generally along the route. A special report was obtained from the Commissioner of Crown Lands and the Conservator of Forests, following receipt of which the position was fully discussed between the Department and the State Forest Service. It was then decided that some 48,440 acres of provisional State forest reserves situated generally in the Eglinton and Upper Hollyford Valleys, together with some 90,650 acres of Crown land, should be added to the National Park in order to bring as much land as possible along the new tourist road within the boundaries of the park. Special legislation (section 20 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1934) was provided to change the purpose of the reservation over the provisional State forest areas, and the Crown land areas were set apart under the provisions of sections 359 and 360 of the Land Act, 1924. The various areas now made national-park reserve are almost totally unfitted for settlement purposes, but offer an unrivalled combination of river, lake, bush, and mountain scenery, and it was considered essential that they should be set apart for all time as part of the national heritage.

During the 1933-34 season the State Forest Service maintained a motor-cycle patrol in the Eglinton Valley for the purpose of controlling camping and safeguarding the forest from fire. The responsibility for this work was taken over by the Lands Department last season, and a regular patrol maintained from the 1st December to the 30th April, during which period approximately 2,000 motor-vehicles visited the Eglinton.

With the assistance of the Public Works Department and the Southland Automobile Association a proper camping-ground with conveniences, fireplaces, motor-track, &c., was laid off at Cascade Creek, and fireplaces and conveniences were also installed at three subsidiary grounds. There is no doubt that the provision of adequate facilities at the camping-grounds met a great need, and also materially assisted in reducing the fire menace. A small charge was made for the use of the camping-grounds.

A temporary right to conduct an accommodation-house at Cascade Creek was granted at a suitable ground rental.

The motor-cycle patrol will be re-established next season with headquarters at Monkey Creek, in the Upper Hollyford. It is proposed to provide a hut for the patrol-man, who will undertake the same duties as during last season, and in addition will organize, with the co-operation of the Public Works Department, a fire-fighting gang of roadmen able to deal immediately with any outbreak of fire in the Hollyford. The patrol will probably be made a permanent one until at least the completion of the tunnel, as it is desired to take every possible precaution to prevent any damage to the exceedingly beautiful scenery in the Upper Hollyford.

It is considered that Monkey Creek, which is situated at the 59½ mile peg from Te Anau, will develop into a favourite camping-spot, and it is proposed to provide adequate camping facilities there in readiness for next season. The distance between the Te Anau Hotel and Milford Hotel is only seventy-five miles, and when the tunnel has been pierced and the road completed there will probably be no need for any permanent accommodation-houses in between. In the meantime, however, it is considered that some accommodation to serve people who do not wish to camp will be necessary at Monkey Creek, and the Department will probably arrange to call tenders for the right to conduct temporary accommodation there for a period of two years.

The following description of the route from Invercargill to the Gertrude Saddle was supplied by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and will be found of considerable interest :—

“ From Invercargill the road first traverses the rich lowland farm lands of Southland, and then enters the run country, which stretches from Dipton to Te Anau. There is not a great deal of interest to be seen from the scenic point of view until Te Anau Lake and Hotel are reached—100 miles from Invercargill. The principal attraction at this point is the view of the National Park, mountains, and lake to the west. The country surrounding the hotel itself is drab and uninteresting, being covered with fern and manuka.

“ Commencing at zero, at this point the new Eglinton or Milford Road is pegged in miles, and will be dealt with accordingly.

“ It follows the eastern shore of the lake generally for 9½ miles before entering a scenic reserve, and traverses the bush for approximately 1½ miles until it reaches a burned-over portion of the reserve. The principal attraction so far is the view to the west and across the lake.