

Council, to control the Northcote (Kauri Glen) Reserve; and the Mount Balloon Hut Scenic Board, to control the Mount Balloon Hut Scenic Reserve. Additional areas were placed under the control of the Pongaroa and Hundalee Scenic Reserve Boards. An appointment was made filling a vacancy on the Kirk's Bush Scenic Board.

Four gentlemen were appointed as honorary inspectors of scenic reserves throughout the Dominion, and certificates of appointment issued. Much valuable work has been performed by the numerous honorary Inspectors who are assisting the Department in safeguarding scenic areas, and the assistance of these public-spirited ladies and gentlemen is gratefully acknowledged. It is pleasing also to record that the public generally are taking an increasing interest in the preservation of the Dominion's scenic reserves.

An Inspector of Reserves was appointed for the South Island, and a similar appointment is being made for the North Island.

Special instructions were issued to all field officers of the Department drawing attention to the importance of a close supervision of all scenic reserves in order to prevent damage by trespassing stock, fires, removal of trees, &c.; and every available opportunity is being taken to keep the reserves under as close supervision as is possible.

CONDITION OF RESERVES, ETC.

Reports from the various districts disclose in general a fairly satisfactory state of affairs so far as our scenic reserves are concerned. In some localities, however, there is a regrettable tendency to regard scenic reserves as sources of free grazing and free timber. Closer supervision and the gradual fencing of reserves which are particularly liable to stock trespass will tend to greatly improve the position, as will also the trend of public opinion, which now seems definitely in favour of the preservation of the beauty spots of the Dominion.

No fire damage of any consequence occurred during the year, practically the only case reported being that of a fire which burnt the fringe of the Brown River Reserve in the Rai Valley and destroyed about 30 acres of light bush and fern.

GENERAL.

The Trounson Kauri Park maintains its great popularity with visitors from all parts of the Dominion and from overseas. A permanent caretaker is employed, who gives every assistance possible to those wishing to view this magnificent kauri forest. A splendid regeneration of young kauris is taking place in those portions of the forest where light is able to penetrate through the vast canopy of trees. Suitable motor-camping and picnic areas have been established for the convenience and enjoyment of visitors, and have been freely availed of by the public.

Public interest in the Cape Kidnapper Bird Sanctuary has been well maintained, the number of visitors during the season being between three and four thousand. Last winter £50 was spent in constructing steps on the steep part of the track leading to the nesting area, in erecting a shelter-shed with tanks for water-supply, and in fencing a small area surrounding the shelter-shed as a preliminary step to planting native trees. Remarks in the visitors' book indicate general appreciation of these amenities, which have been financed principally by funds contributed by the public.

Further work has been carried out in reconditioning the tracks in the Tennyson Inlet Reserves, and the bush walks have been much appreciated by many visitors. Steady efforts are being made to control the deer, pigs, and goats on these and other reserves in the Marlborough Sounds, and the position is gradually improving in that respect. The colony of rabbits on the Inner Chetwode Islands still persists, but is being kept in check, a number of the animals being destroyed during the year. The total eradication of the pest is most difficult owing to the rugged nature of the land and the dense undergrowth.

The picturesque reserves on the Kaikoura Coast are being disturbed to some extent by construction work on the South Island Main Trunk Railway. Every care, however, is being taken to destroy as little bush as possible, and it is considered that quick regeneration of much of the bush will occur after the completion of the railway.

It is proposed to create a special fire district in order to minimize the fire risk in the Papatowai and Tautuku reserves on the South Otago Coast, and the initial steps have been completed. The proposed fire district, together with the adjoining State forest fire area, should go a long way towards ensuring the protection of these valuable reserves from fire. Pigeons, tuis, and bellbirds appear to be increasing in the Otago reserves generally, while the smaller native birds seem to be holding their own. This is particularly so in the reserves in the Catlins District.

The Ranger on Stewart Island reports that, so far as he can judge, the native birds seem to be holding their own, and that some species appear to be increasing. Deer, however, continue to spread, and it is evident that some effective steps will have to be taken to reduce their numbers. Opossums also seem to be on the increase. No fire damage to scenic reserves occurred during the year.

GIFTS OF SCENIC AREAS.

A valuable gift has been made to the public by Mr. F. Hutchinson, of Omatua, Rissington, who has transferred to the Crown an area of some 274 acres near Puketitiri Township. The area comprises approximately 220 acres of open country and 54 acres of bush land. The gift has been accepted by the Government, and arrangements are being made for the control of the bush area under the Scenery Preservation Act and of the open area as a public domain. The actual reservation of the scenic area has not yet been completed, as it has been found necessary to arrange some small exchanges to improve the boundaries of the bush land.