

The administrative policy of the Service encourages the recreational use of State forests under necessary but not irksome safeguards, and facilities are extended from time to time to meet the requirements of increasing popularity.

It is pleasing to report that no serious damage occurred during the past year from this source, notwithstanding an abnormally high fire hazard in many parts and the fact that no undue restriction of visitors to popular picnic and camping spots was made. This favourable position is no doubt due largely to the co-operation of the thousands who visited the forests in observing the simple rules regarding the use of fire in proper places and exercising reasonable care of the forest growth.

The kauri State forests of North Auckland, particularly Waipoua, Puketi, and Mangamuka, again attracted a large number of tourists and visitors, while next in popularity was undoubtedly the Hanmer exotic State forest in North Canterbury, which, in addition to individuals, was visited by several organizations.

Camping was enjoyed in suitable and conveniently located State forests throughout the Dominion, while in one case—State Forest No. 22 (Southland)—sixty-two camping permits were issued.

In addition to casual visitors and campers, some fifteen tramping clubs, alpine clubs, ski clubs and winter sports clubs, with an approximate total membership of three thousand, enjoyed the privileges of the forest, and the assistance of club members in the protection of those remotely situated areas embraced by their activities is gratefully acknowledged.

The whole of the State forests in the Rimutaka, Tararua, and Ruahine Ranges are made use of as sports grounds by nine tramping clubs, and under permits from the Service some fifteen club huts have been built for the accommodation of members. One new one was built during the year on Mount Holdsworth (Tararua State Forest) by the Hutt Valley Tramping Club. These huts are erected under conditions which provide that they are controlled by the clubs but are the property of the Crown. Clubs are also permitted to establish necessary access tracks under conditions which provide for a minimum of damage to the forest growth.

It should be made clear that the establishment of vested rights in State forests cannot be entertained, as only by adopting this policy can the Forest Service reasonably safeguard the forests from damage by fire or vandalism.

4. COMMERCIAL AFFORESTATION COMPANIES.

The Service continues to receive from time to time inquiries from overseas investors and others concerning the operations of various commercial afforestation companies in the Dominion. All such inquiries should be directed to the Commissioner of Stamp Duties, Wellington, C. 1.

5. HONORARY FOREST RANGERS.

This report would not be complete without some reference to the assistance the Service receives from its corps of honorary forest rangers. The number now stands at 216. There were 35 new appointments made during the year and 3 resignations were received. These gentlemen have the status of forest officers, *vide* section 10 of the Forests Act, 1921–22, and their services—several of many years standing—are again gratefully acknowledged. Without this voluntary help, principally during the fire season, many remotely situated forests could not be adequately supervised.