

Scenery Preservation Act. Over the next twenty years, the Scenery Preservation Commission and the Board which followed laid the foundations for the reservation we have today.

It was well into the 1920s before 'national park' began to collect some definition in terms of an ethic or a defined objective. The term has been always understood as a trusted (often the only trusted) level of protection. Many national park proposals have arisen from a general wish to protect land, using the only perceived and secure designation.

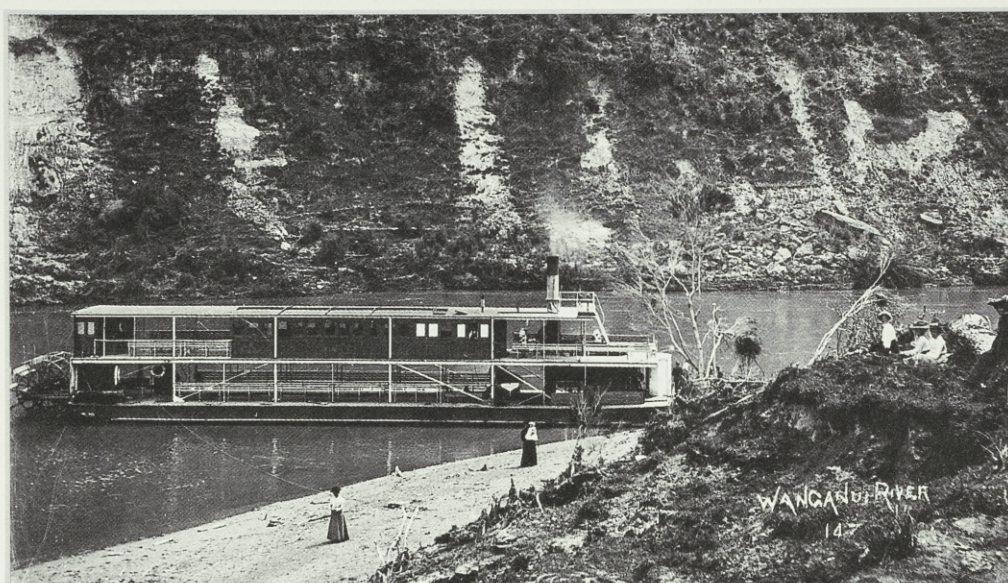
The ethic and objectives of the national park idea in New Zealand were shaped by events of the 1920-40 period. By 1920, the deer importations of the late 1800s, and early 1900s had resulted in populations which could be recognised as a threat and



pest by forest experts. By the 1930s high deer populations and forest destruction were reaping the grim harvests of soil erosion and flooding. Lance McCaskill, and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, took a leading role in the advocacy which resulted in the passage of our first soil conservation legislation. Growing awareness of the importance of land protection influenced the establishment of the reservation which later became Urewera National Park.

It was the deer and goat which shaped the 'extermination' provisions of the eventual national park legislation, just as heather in and near Tongariro National Park shaped the attitude to introduced plants. In the 1900-1920 period 'national park' was clearly public land, but some influential people saw it as 'park' in a European sense. John Cullen, the warden of Tongariro National Park, with the support of William Massey, the Prime Minister, set out to plant a huge grouse moor with Scottish Heather. The debates about this issue helped to clarify the objectives which were stated later.

It is in some respects surprising that Abel Tasman National Park should have been the



Tourism has been a strong influence in the shaping of our national park system even before the 1890s when Thomas Mackenzie was pointing to the importance of the Fiordland area. The Wanganui River was in the early 1900s billed as the 'Rhine of New Zealand' with a fleet of steamers servicing tourist journeys on the river. Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library

fourth. Abel Tasman has quite a curious connection with the Second World War. Like many other campaigns, that by Perrine Moncrieff and Nelson people had land protection as its objective. They saw the significance of 1942 as the tercentenary of Abel Tasman's arrival in Golden Bay, and pointed to the appropriateness of joining with our allies in the War, the Dutch people, in the national park declaration. The Queen of the Netherlands became the Patron of the park.

### Creative partnership

The Federated Mountain Clubs took a key role in the 30s and 40s in the shaping of our very fine national park legislation. Conservation works best in New Zealand when government and citizen join in a creative partnership. Such a partnership functioned through the 1940s, A.P. Harper, Lance McCaskill, F.M.C., Forest and Bird, and the Royal Society all being involved on the citizen side. The catalyst proved to be Ron Cooper in the Department of Lands and Survey, supported by his Director-General D.M. Greig, and two reservation conscious ministers, Messrs Skinner and Corbett. Cooper was actually responsible for the wording of some of the important philosophical statements which come down to us today in the 1980 Act.

American ideas influenced New Zealand National Park development from the 1930s onward, initially through McCaskill who visited the United States several times. When the philosophy, which was eventually incorporated into the National Parks Act of 1952, was being hammered out in the 1940s by reformers like McCaskill and A.P. Harper, the Federated Mountain Clubs, and government officials, McCaskill was testing New Zealand ideas against American practice.

The first National Parks Authority carried out an enormous task, bringing the system together, establishing boards, and defining policy; in short, bringing order out of the chaos of different administrations. Some parks had been administered under the Domains Act by the Department of Lands and Survey, and others had been set up at dif-

ferent times by specific legislation which resulted in different board structures.

While the ranger service can be said to have begun with Richard Henry on Resolution Island in the 1890s, it was in the 1950s that it began to develop strength and expertise. The service expanded, training programmes commenced, and *esprit de corps* evolved.

By 1964, there were ten national parks, and an established ranger service. The whole system, was, and remained until 1980, citizen-administered with the Authority responsible for policy and general oversight, and the boards in executive control of their parks. Rangers were employed directly by the boards, but this changed in the late 60s when the rangers became an employment group within the civil service in order to provide a career structure. The Depart-



This 1930s Railways poster has an almost military aspect. Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library