

## A PART TO PLAY IN THE FUTURE

Controversial new legislation passed late last year makes great changes in the administration of National Parks and scenic reserves. The old National Park Boards are replaced by a system of regional boards who will advise the Lands & Survey Department on the management of both the National Parks and the scenic and other reserves that lie within their districts. The regional boards will be coordinated by the National Parks & Reserves Authority, which is responsible for making general policy and for approving management plans for National Parks, and which reports to and advises the Director General of Lands & Survey and the Minister of Lands. The new system thus parallels that already existing for state forest lands, whereby a series of advisory committees assists the Forest Service and the Minister of Forests with the management of State Forest Parks. In both cases the public, either as individuals or as organisations, are given the opportunity to make submissions on management plans or general policy documents.

The Wellington National Parks & Reserves Board district has approximately the same boundaries as the Wellington Land District, with the exclusion of Tongariro National Park. It includes, therefore, the Wairarapa, Manawatu, Rangitikei and Wanganui areas, with a narrow northward extension almost to Taumarunui, between Taranaki and Tongariro National Park. There are no National Parks within this district, but some 108 smaller scenic and scientific reserves, including Kapiti Island.

One of the first tasks of the Board will be to survey the existing reserves to see if they are all of national interest and importance, and if there are gaps in the regional and ecological representation where new reserves should be proposed. The Wellington Botanical Society should be able to make a substantial contribution to this evaluation. Many reserves have already been the subject of field studies, as a result of which species lists and/or descriptions of the vegetation were prepared and sometimes published in the *Bulletin*. The Society could now make a point of visiting some of the more obscure and out-of-the-way reserves and evaluating the condition of the vegetation and its representative importance. One of our country members, Michael Greenwood of Palmerston North, has already agreed to make botanical surveys of some of the reserves in this part of the district. It is also open to us to suggest other remnants of natural vegetation that deserve reserve status. Work by the Society some years ago resulted in the protection (as Kiripiti Scientific Reserve) of some of the interesting totara forest that occurs on the stony flats of the Otaki River.

This is our chance to assist in ensuring the best possible endowment of reserves for the Wellington region, and we should not fail to grasp it. The reputation of the Society is such that its recommendations will not be taken lightly.

M. B. Forde.