

THE CAIRNGORMS AS A NATIONAL PARK.

THE question of the establishment of a National Park or National Parks has assumed a new phase by the appointment of a Departmental Committee to report upon the subject, and, as the claims of the Cairngorms to be selected as the most suitable area in Scotland, are being strongly urged in various quarters, it may be well to put on record the main features of the movement which is now in progress. Credit for launching the idea of the Cairngorms as a National Park rests with *The Scots Magazine* which in the late autumn of 1928 published several articles urging the formation of such a Park or Nature Reserve in Scotland, and emphasizing the attractions offered by the Cairngorms for such a purpose. The subject was taken up in other periodicals, notably *The Glasgow Herald*, and in June, 1929, a conference called by the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, took place in Glasgow at which the matter was further canvassed, the consensus of opinion being in favour of the Cairngorms as the most suitable area. As a result of this conference a committee, called the Scottish Forest Reserve Committee, representing mountaineering clubs and other out-door organizations, was set up to promote the movement. The Cairngorm Club is represented on this Committee by its President, Mr. James A. Parker.

While this discussion was in progress in Scotland, opinion in England was also stirred into activity. Lord Bledisloe in a letter to *The Times* suggested that the Forest of Dean, which is Crown land, should be developed as a National Park, with facilities for week-end camping and other out-door interests, while in Wales a proposal to convert the Snowdon region into a Welsh National Park was similarly advocated.

Following upon this widespread display of interest in the subject, the Government set up a Departmental Committee to report upon the establishment of a National Park or Parks from the recreational point of view and from the point of view of the preservation of native flora and fauna. The Chairman of the Committee is Dr. Addison, and Scotland is represented upon it by Sir John Stirling Maxwell and Sir Robert B. Greig, the head of the Scottish Department of

Agriculture. The Committee has heard evidence from the representatives of various organizations in England, Wales, and Scotland, amongst these being the Scottish Forest Reserve Committee, already mentioned, and the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland. These bodies have recommended the Cairngorms as a National Park for recreational purposes, and Glen Affric as a reserve for flora and fauna.

The Town Council of Aberdeen took up the matter and in January it adopted a report prepared by a sub-committee of the Links and Parks Committee and resolved to submit this report to the Departmental Committee. The report, which was drafted by Mr. George Roberts and Mr. Henry Alexander, states in detail the advantages offered by the Cairngorms as a National Park or Reserve and offers definite suggestions as to how the area should be treated, along with estimates of the expenditure involved in making the necessary roads and acquiring the land. The area suggested extends from Loch Bulg and Inchrory west to Glen Feshie and Rothiemurchus, the approximate extent being some 282 square miles and the estimated capital value of the land, including, of course, the sporting rights which are the chief item, being £354,000. If this area be considered too large, it is suggested that Beinn a' Bhuid and Ben Avon be omitted, thus reducing the area to 168 square miles, and the capital cost to £195,000.

The report lays great stress throughout upon the importance of interfering as little as possible with the natural condition of the area. The roads to Derry Lodge, Glen Einich and Glen More would be improved and chalet inns and refuge huts would be built at a few selected points, but the interior of the area would be kept intact and inviolate as a sanctuary for the walker and nature lover.

The Town Council of Aberdeen by adopting this report has made it clear that, while it welcomes the idea of a National Park or Reserve in the Cairngorms, and while it confidently urges the great attractions of the area for the purpose, it is strongly opposed to anything that will destroy the character of the region or convert it into a mere glorified tea garden.