

SECOND REPORT

OF THE

BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD,

APPOINTED UNDER AN ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY.

WELLINGTON.

—
1871.

SECOND REPORT OF THE BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD.

THE Board met during the past year on 21st July, 15th September, 23rd September, 10th November, 1870; and 6th January, 5th April, 24th April, and 24th August, 1871.

The Treasurer's statement, hereto annexed, shows the expenditure on the Gardens during the above period, the items being arranged under different heads.

The future maintenance of the Gardens has been the subject of careful consideration by the Board, and the following statement and recommendations are submitted for the consideration of the Legislature:—

The Botanic Garden Reserve was originally made in laying out the Town of Wellington. It is 13 acres in extent, and is a narrow inconveniently-shaped strip of land parallel with the Tinakori Road, having an average width of 4 chains and length of 29 chains. It remained for years neglected and unfenced, so that the original forest was almost entirely destroyed by squatters who camped out on the reserve. In 1868 the reserve was brought under the operation of the Public Domains Act; and, an official Warden being appointed, the Reserve was cleared of these persons, and a fence put up along the roadside, at the expense of the Colonial Government. A plot of nursery ground was also prepared by the Overseer of Public Domains, and several thousand plants raised, with the view of the future stocking of the Gardens.

In 1869, an Act was passed to relieve certain Trustees from the custody of a sum amounting to £376 7s. 6d. which had accumulated for the purpose of establishing a Botanic Garden in Wellington; and this fund, together with the management of the Botanic Reserve, was placed in the hands of a Board partly nominated by Act, partly appointed by the Colonial Government, and in part elected by scientific societies throughout the Colony.

Contiguous to the reserve, the Board found a large area of unoccupied land known as the Wesleyan Reserve, part of which was covered with Native forest in a tolerable state of preservation, and well adapted for conversion into a Public Domain. The custody of this area they found to be in the hands of the Provincial Government, although some doubts existed as to the exact condition of the title. The Board therefore represented to the Superintendent of Wellington the advantage of enclosing certain portions of this area along with the Botanic Garden Reserve proper, so as to preserve the Native bush that still remained, and to extend the area of the Domain. Leave was granted by the Superintendent to the Board to enclose whatever portions of the Wesleyan Reserve they might think necessary, on the understanding that, in the event of any question being raised as to the title, the Board should be allowed to remove all the improvements they might have made.

With only a slight increase of the extent of fencing required to enclose the narrow strip of the Botanic Reserve proper, the Board were able to fence in forty-three acres, including all the ground best adapted for the formation of an ornamental and experimental Botanic Garden.

The chief improvements, in addition to the fencing constructed, are the formation of paths, the distribution of seats, and planting; but, as a rule, the planting of standard trees has been restricted as far as possible to the area over which the Board has full legal control.

The Board have expended the sum of £634 18s. 5d. in these improvements, of which sum £497 8s. may be considered to be initial expenditure that will not recur. A further sum of about £500 will be required for completing the improvements of a permanent character, after which the management and gradual development of the Domain can be effected for an annual sum of £250.

The Board have therefore arrived at a period in their operations when they can point to the work already done with some confidence, as showing the advantages and general utility of the garden, and especially the great natural capabilities of the site that has been chosen. At the same time they feel anxious that any doubts as to the permanence of the work that has been so far advanced should be removed,—doubts which arise from the nature of the tenure which the Board has over a large part of the Domain they have enclosed, and also from the want of any permanent provision or endowment for future maintenance.

With the view of effecting these objects, the Board, after due consideration of the question in connection with the general subject of the management of all the Recreation Reserves in Wellington, recommend—

1. That the difficulties as to title be removed by legislative action.
2. That the Superintendent should be empowered to convey to the Botanic Garden Board the Wesleyan Reserve, subject to reservation of a site for a lunatic asylum; and also the Te Aro Park, and the Canal and Basin Reserves, or those parts of them that require to be planted and ornamented, subject to a power to the Cricket Club to use the Basin Reserve according to arrangement.
3. That the lands constituting the Town Belt be granted to Commissioners, with power to lease them.
4. That the rents derived from the Town Belt be applied (subject to the expense of management) as follows:—

- (1.) In part to the improvement of the lands vested in Botanic Garden Board.
- (2.) In part to other improvements connected with the ornamentation of the Belt and City.

G. F. BOWEN,
President.

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT OF THE WORK DONE.

Fencing.—The fencing necessary to enclose the reserve was completed at the end of September, 1870, by the erection of 63 chains of a substantial four-rail black birch post and rail fence, at 44s. per chain; 30 chains of live fence have also been planted along the Tinakori Road.

Paths.—232 chains of paths have been cut, at a cost (including repairs up to date) of 5s. 6d. per chain. They are at present only 3 feet wide on the solid, the intention being to widen them by degrees where requisite, as they are repaired from time to time.

Nursery.—A nursery ground has been formed with sod frames, in which a large number of *Coniferae* and other trees have been successfully raised from seed.

A dam has been formed for storing water, and piping laid down so as to allow of the beds being irrigated during the summer, at small cost for labour.

Flax plants and seedlings of several varieties have also been planted out for experimental purposes, and a large plantation of mulberry trees formed.

The cost of the waterworks, frames, tool-house, tools, and trenching and drainage of ground, has been £55 3s. 4d.

Cottage.—The cottage, out-house, and orchard, which were on the ground when the Board took possession, have been purchased for the sum of £45.

Seats.—Six octagonal and straight seats of solid totara have been fixed in suitable positions throughout the gardens, at a cost of £36 16s.

Naming of Plants.—A contribution of £50 was received by the Board from the Wellington Philosophical Society, for the purpose of completing the collection of indigenous plants growing in the Domain by the addition of those found in other parts of the Colony; and also for purchasing labels for the principal shrubs and trees along the paths, giving the scientific, popular, and Maori names.

These conditions have been carried out as far as practicable; a sum of £13 having been spent in purchasing Alpine and other rare New Zealand plants, and the sum of £25 5s. 5d. having been expended for labels, 450 of which have been placed in the grounds.

Planting.—The appended list* shows the names of the trees and shrubs that have been planted out, chiefly under the direction of Mr. Ludlam, who also kindly prepared the list, and whose great experience is a sufficient guarantee for the efficiency with which that most important branch of the work has been performed. The list also gives a summary of the number of plants presented to and purchased for the gardens, and also those that have been raised from seed.

The total cost has been £117 15s. 2d., of which the sum of £40 has been paid for the young plants, and the balance for the preparation of the ground and for planting.

The above works have been done by contract; and the additional amount expended for labour, including the salary of the Superintendent of the Gardens, has been £146 10s. 5d.

ACCLIMATIZATION SOCIETY.

This Society has been permitted to use certain portions of the Domain for the purpose of rearing interesting birds and fish, on the understanding that they do not interfere with the general scheme adopted by the Board for laying out the Botanic Gardens.

JAMES HECTOR,
Secretary.

ACCOUNTS of BOTANIC GARDENS, from 21st July, 1870, to August, 1871.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance		57	19 4	1. For Paths		67	7 0
Vote for 1870-71		300	0 0	2. For Fencing		37	13 0
Cash from Trustees		120	0 0	3. For Nursery		55	3 4
Grant in aid of Flax		50	0 0	4. Compensation for Cottage		45	0 0
Grant from Wellington Philosophical Society		50	0 0	5. For Garden Work (including wages of Keeper and extra labourer)		136	1 7
				6. Planting and Purchase of young Trees		117	15 2
				7. For Seats		36	16 0
				8. For Names for Plants		25	5 5
				Balance in hand		56	17 10
		£577	19 4			£577	19 4

A. LUDLAM,
Treasurer.

* The list referred to has not been printed.