

SESS. II.—1887.
NEW ZEALAND.

BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD, 1886-87.

(EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

THE Board held meetings on the 22nd July, 1886, and on the 10th February, 1887, the current management of the Gardens having been superintended during the intervals by individual members.

The period to which the present report and balance-sheet apply includes thirteen months, during which the total expenditure has been £280 7s. 3d., or, deducting accounts paid in August, 1887, £268 5s. 7d., as against £239 1s. 2d. in the previous year, and £332 4s. 6d. in the year before that.

The ordinary expenditure for labour in keeping the grounds in order, including salary paid to the superintendent, has averaged about £16 a month. The extra expenditure of £51 has been incurred in clearing 21½ acres of gorse, which was done by contract, and in the re-erection of part of the boundary-fence, and in repairing damages which were done by several extensive fires. One of these, which took place on the same night when so many other fires occurred in Wellington, unfortunately destroyed the outbuildings, sheds, and most of the tools belonging to the Gardens, and did serious damage to the plantations, especially to the camellia trees.

A considerable expenditure is still required for completing the renewal of the boundary-fence between the Upland Farm and the domain, a share of which, however, should be paid for by the adjoining proprietor. For this work it is proposed to utilise the rails of the present fence (most of which are unusually heavy and in good order) as posts, and to substitute a wire fence for the present posts and rails. A completely new fence is urgently needed at the frontage of the domain towards the Tinakori Road, at an estimated cost of £50; and a further expenditure will be required in repairing the fence between the domain and the Town Belt on the east side.

The revenue of the Board has been wholly derived from its share of the rents of the city reserves allotted by statute, amounting to £298 7s. 9d. for a period of eighteen months (October, 1885, to April, 1887); to which is added a balance of £149 5s. 2d. brought forward from the previous year. As the rents have only been paid up to the 31st March last, a small balance is at present outstanding.

Although no assistance has been received from Government for continuing the important and useful work of cultivating young trees for distribution, the Board has been able to make important concessions in this direction to various public bodies, making only a very moderate charge to cover the expense of packing.

At the present time, in addition to a large number of deciduous trees, 800 plants of the best species of pines and cypresses for shelter and ornamental planting are on hand and available for distribution. The laying-out of the ornamental ground near the entrance-gate for special collections has now been completed, but it will not be opened to the public until it has undergone a necessary spring cleaning. The land has been laid out in beds, intersected by gravel walks with box-edgings, and as far as possible a grouping of plants in these beds useful for instruction has been followed. A large collection of native plants has especially been accumulated, and these will be placed in position by degrees as they are sufficiently established. The usual concession of freshly-imported seeds for distribution was not received this year from Government; but, as a large number of introduced forest-trees are now bearing freely, several bushels of seeds of the most valuable and ornamental species have been garnered for distribution, while the seeds of the native trees and shrubs have also been carefully collected for transmission in exchange to correspondents outside the colony.

The following donations have to be acknowledged: (1.) Seeds of *Chamærops ritchiana* and *Doryanthes excelsa*, from Royal Gardens, Kew. (2.) New Zealand plants: *Meryta*, *Dicksonia*, *Lomaria*, and *Liparophyllum*, from T. Kirk. (3.) South American seeds, from S. C. Anderson. (4.) Seeds of *Medicago*, *Eucalyptus*, *Canavalia*, &c., from Baron von Mueller, K.C.M.G.

The Honorary Treasurer's statement of accounts, which is appended, shows a credit balance in hand at this date of £167 5s. 8d.

JAMES HECTOR, Manager.

Approved by the Board,

G. M. WATERHOUSE, Chairman.

30th August, 1887.