

SESS. II.—1891.  
NEW ZEALAND.

BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD, 1890-91.  
(TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT.)

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

MEETINGS of the Board were held during the past year on the following dates: 29th November, 1890; 10th April and 3rd August, 1891.

From the Treasurer's statement of accounts it will be seen that the expenditure for the year amounts to £198 14s. 5d., nearly the whole of which has been expended on the wages of two men. The revenue of the Board is, with the exception of a small sum for the sale of plants, derived from the statutory share of the rents of the Town Belt, the amount received for the twelve months ending the 31st March, 1891, being £171 12s. 9d. The balance in hand, after paying all liabilities, is, according to the attached statement, £37 11s. 5d.

During the year the work of underbrushing, planting, and other improvements, has steadily progressed. The Board regrets that the small amount of funds at its disposal does not permit it to proceed with the eradication of the gorse, which has spread to a dangerous extent in the upper part of the Domain, and especially along the boundary of the Upland Farm. All the land which the Board cleared in that locality some years ago at great expense has been again overtaken by the gorse, which spreads from the neighbouring property. Another work very urgently required is a general repair and renewal of the fencing. That portion which bounds Tinakori Road is almost useless for protection, and, being nearly twenty-five years old, most of the posts are rotten at the foot, and during the scarcity of fuel last year at the time of the strike, a great deal of the fence was purloined. The cost of clearing the gorse and repairing the fencing would be about £200. If the Board could get a special grant of this amount, and, in addition to the ordinary income from rents, have an annual subsidy of £100, the Domain could be maintained in creditable order, and much useful work in the way of raising and distributing trees and shrubs could be accomplished.

Contributions of seeds and shrubs have been received during the past year as follows: From the Director of Botanic Gardens at Jamaica, from the Botanic Gardens at Bangalore, from Crown Lands Department in Wellington, and from Messrs. Mason, Duthie, Harding, Kirk of Wellington, and Mr. Bell of Grey-mouth.

In view of proposed changes in the management of the Domain, the Board think it desirable again to report on the past history of the operations as detailed in the attached memorandum.

Approved by the Board.

W. B. D. MANTELL,  
Chairman.

JAMES HECTOR,  
Manager.

3rd August, 1891.

BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD.—ACCOUNTS FOR 1890-91.

<i>Receipts.</i>				<i>Expenditure.</i>			
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance in hand, 23rd July, 1890 .. ..		57	13 7	Garden work, including keeper's salary, nursery work, roads, &c. .. ..		193	17 10
Statutory share of rents from Wellington Town Belt for twelve months ending 31st March, 1891 .. ..		171	12 9	For tools, ironwork, &c. .. ..		4	16 7
Sale of plants .. ..		6	19 6	Balance in hand, .. ..		37	11 5
		£236	5 10			£236	5 10

W. T. L. TRAVERS,  
Hon. Treasurer.

MEMORANDUM.

THE following is a brief abstract of the circumstances under which the various reserves now comprised in the Wellington Botanic Garden have become vested in the Board:—

In 1866 (or soon after the establishment of the seat of Government in Wellington) it was represented to the Government that important results for the benefit of the colony might follow the establishment of a garden that would form the basis of operations for a system of forest propagation throughout New Zealand. These views were urged in Parliament, especially by Messrs. Mantell

and Travers, and the late Messrs. Ludlam and Potts, and were cordially supported by the then Premier, Sir Edward Stafford.

The result was that a small strip of land, thirteen acres in extent, which had been set apart in the original survey of the Wellington Settlement as a Botanic Garden, but which had never been used for that purpose, nor conveyed to any managing body, was brought under the provisions of the Public Domains Act, as amended in 1863, and the Governor's powers respecting the same were delegated by Order in Council to the Director of the Geological Survey (*Gazette*, 1868, p. 506). Persons illegally occupying the reserve were warned off it, and a portion of the area was enclosed as a nursery-ground, in which the trees and shrubs were reared which are now growing round Government House, Parliament Buildings, and the official residences, the expenses being defrayed by the Colonial Government without any special vote or grant.

In 1869 the Botanic Garden Board was established by Act, and the reserve referred to was conveyed to it by Crown grant, dated 22nd November, 1869.

In 1871 an Act was passed providing, amongst other things, for extending the area of the Botanic Gardens; and, by the exercise of the powers conferred by this Act, a portion of the land originally surveyed as part of the Town Belt, but since 1852 known and set apart as the "Wesleyan Reserves," was on the 13th March, 1874, conveyed by the Superintendent of the Province of Wellington to the Botanic Garden Board for the same purpose as the original Botanic Garden.

In 1873 the Town Belt, which since 1861 had been managed by Commissioners appointed by the Superintendent, was, in exercise of power conferred upon the Superintendent of Wellington by the Acts of 1871 and 1872, with the exception of certain portions which were reserved as sites for the purpose of Hospital, Lunatic Asylum, College, and Signal-station, conveyed to the Mayor, Councillors, and burgesses of the City of Wellington in trust, for purposes of public utility to the town of Wellington and its inhabitants, and with power to let the same for depasturage only. The revenue from such rents was by the Act of 1872 directed to be expended as follows: One-half towards the construction and maintenance of roads through the Belt, and the other half towards the ornamental planting of the lands referred to in the Act, but one-third of the last-mentioned half thus derived was to be paid to the Board of Governors of the Botanic Garden, to be spent by them in the ornamentation and utilisation of the land conveyed to them by the deed of 1874.

In March, 1875, a further extension of the area under the control of the Board was obtained by arrangement with the Cemetery Trustees, but this arrangement is entirely a matter of good-will, the land being neither conveyed nor leased to the Board.

The area thus secured under the foregoing conditions has a total extent of ninety-three acres.

During the past twenty years the Board has expended, in the development of the garden, as a local domain, and as a centre of distribution for forest growth, the sum of £7,992 14s. 6d., derived as follows: Government grants, £4,532 5s. 9d.; produce of sales and for services, £621 12s. 10d.; share of Town Belt rents since 1874, £2,876 7s. 4d.

The details of the receipts and expenditure during the period specified are hereto appended, and it will be found that in its operations the Board has always kept in view the fact that its resources are both local and colonial, and has, in the expenditure of the funds at its disposal, always allocated a fair proportion towards the ornamenting and utilising of the land granted to it by the deed of 1874.

During the above period a report of the operations of the Board and balance-sheet have been presented annually to Parliament, and published.

The chief works of improvement have been 250 chains of fencing for boundary and subdividing purposes; 400 chains of paths, graded and formed; 70 fixed seats, substantially made of totara; and cottages for the gardener and ranger; a nursery-ground, with shelter-houses, water-supply, and other appliances, in which about 200,000 trees and shrubs have been raised from seed. Fifteen thousand of these trees have been planted in the gardens, and the remainder distributed, either free or at a small charge to cover the expense of packing, to various public domains and private persons throughout the colony. Experiments in the growth of various economic plants have been conducted and reported on. A native garden, botanically arranged, containing indigenous flora, has been laid out.

These constitute the chief items of initial outlay which have been incurred, and the current expenditure is chiefly for the cleaning of shrubberies and walks and maintenance of the paths and fences.

From the foregoing it appears that the city never has had vested in it any portion of the land occupied by the garden; nor has the city out of its revenues ever supplied any portion of the funds. That more than two-thirds of the expenditure which has created the valuable property now vested in the Board has been derived from general colonial and not from local sources, the citizens of Wellington, as such, having never contributed to the maintenance of the garden, while they have enjoyed its use.

During the last eighteen years the Borough Council, as trustees for the rents of the Town Belt, has collected the sum of £17,095 8s. 10d., which has been expended as follows: Expenditure on, up to 1888-89—Roads, £2,885 5s. 4d.; reserves, £2,655 17s. 6d.; sale of leases, £236 11s. 4d.; fencing, £368 12s. 7d.; surveys, £378 5s.; planting seeds, &c., £744 8s. 4d.; legal expenses and sundries, £108 19s. 4d.; labour, £6,993 0s. 11d.; timber and material, £1,520 16s. 1d.; maintenance, Ohio Road, £131 8s.; basin reserve drain, £490; Botanic Garden Board, £2,539 17s. 9d. Deducting the sum of £2,539 17s. 9d., which has been received by the Botanic Garden Board, there remains the sum of £14,555 11s. 1d., which has been expended by the Borough Council on the Town Belt.

From inquiries which have been made it does not appear that in any case has a Domain or Botanic Garden been actually vested in any city Corporation. In the case of Auckland and Dunedin, the Corporation has been, by Proclamation, made a Domain Board under the Public Domains Act. In Christchurch, as in Wellington, the Domain is in charge of a Board appointed under special Act.

The following is a comparative statement of the position of the four principal city Domains :—

—			Extent.	Revenue.	Source.	Management.
			Acres.	£		
Auckland	...	...	196	400	Rents	Borough Council as Domain Board.
Wellington	...	...	93	180	Rents	Board under special Act.
Christchurch	...	...	430	462	Rents	Board under special Act.
Dunedin	...	...	41	450	Borough funds	Borough Council as Domain Board.

The following schedule gives the total classified receipts and expenditure of the Botanic Garden Board from 1869 to 1890-91 :—

<i>Receipts.</i>				£	s.	d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>				£	s.	d.
From Trustees	..	..	..	410	15	5	Fencing	..	..	..	356	17	6
Votes by Parliament	..	..	..	3,421	10	4	Planting	..	..	..	943	7	10
Votes by Provincial Council	..	..	..	600	0	0	Paths, seats, &c.	..	..	..	512	17	3
Grant in aid of flax from Commissioners	..	..	..	50	0	0	Buildings	..	..	..	409	12	0
Grant from Wellington Philosophical Society	..	..	..	50	0	0	Labour	..	..	..	5,312	10	3
City Reserve rents	..	..	..	2,876	7	4	Miscellaneous (tools, &c.)	..	..	..	457	9	8
Sale of plants	..	..	..	414	12	4	Balance in hand, 31st July, 1891	..	..	..	37	11	5
Sale of hay	..	..	..	207	0	6							
Total	..	..	..	£8,030	5	11					£8,030	5	11

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