

1940.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY.
PUBLIC DOMAINS AND NATIONAL PARKS
OF NEW ZEALAND.

(ANNUAL REPORT ON).

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

Department of Lands and Survey,
Wellington, 1st August, 1940.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit herewith a report on the public domains and national parks of the Dominion for the year ended 31st March, 1940.

I have, &c.,

R. G. MACMORRAN,
Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. Frank Langstone, Minister of Lands.

REPORT.

PART I.—PUBLIC DOMAINS.

At the 31st March, 1940, the total number of public domains administered under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, was 788, covering a total area of some 76,900 acres. Fifty-four of these domains are controlled by the various Commissioners of Crown Lands, 273 are controlled by local authorities acting as Domain Boards, and the remaining 461 are controlled by local Boards appointed from time to time.

During the year thirteen new domains, with a total area of 96 acres, were reserved and brought under Part II of the Act, and arrangements made for their control. Additions totalling 371 acres were also made to twenty-one existing domains.

The new domains comprised the following :—

- (1) An area of 2 acres at Ngataki, North Auckland. Here the residents by their own efforts levelled a small piece of unoccupied land and constructed two tennis-courts for public use. The Department then surveyed and reserved the area, which has been placed under the control of a Board of local people.
- (2) An area of 5 acres 2 roods in the Mangatete Farm Settlement, North Auckland. The Department was encouraged to constitute this area as a domain by the keen interest shown by local settlers in the matter of forming a recreation-ground for the district.
- (3) An area of 10 acres near Kaeo, now known as the Waikoura Domain. The land was portion of the Waikoura Reclamation Area, and the reservation was arranged at the request of the Whangaroa County Council, which has accepted the responsibility of controlling the new domain.
- (4) Two small areas of 1 acre 3 roods and 1 rood 26·3 perches at Rothesay Bay, on the Hauraki Gulf between Brown's Bay and Murray's Bay. These areas had become vested in the Crown as recreation reserves on the subdivision of private land for residential purposes, and were made a public domain on the application of the Waitemata County Council.
- (5) An area of 10 acres 1 rood at Orakei lying between Paritai Drive and the Waterfront Road. This area has considerable possibilities for development as an ornamental park, and was marked for reservation at the time the first residential subdivisions were laid off in Orakei. It has been placed under the control of the Auckland City Council.

- (6) Certain small reserves at Maraetai situated in the Town of Maraetai Extensions Nos. 3 and 5, and containing a total area of 4 acres 2 roods 38·1 perches. The reserves have a considerable beach frontage, and the new domain has been placed under the control of the Manukau County Council.
- (7) An area of 11 acres and 18 perches at Galatea. The land adjoins the Galatea School, and has been made a domain in accordance with the wishes of the local settlers. The Department has made a small grant to assist in the fencing of the reserve.
- (8) An area of 16 acres 2 roods 23 perches at Murupara reserved on the application of the settlers in this newly developed district. The land formed portion of a leasehold farm, but the lessee readily agreed to surrender the area so as to provide for a recreation-ground for the district. A local Domain Board has been appointed, and has received a small grant from the Department to assist in fencing the reserve.
- (9) An area of 12 acres and 15 perches near Mokau, known as the Tainui Domain. This land was donated by a Native, Te Koro Wetere, for the purpose of providing a ground for games and sports. The Department arranged for survey and for the necessary title adjustments. The new domain has been placed under the control of a Board of local residents, who are energetically carrying out an extensive improvement programme. The sum of £100 from funds standing to the credit of the Tongaporutu Domain (an unused reserve which has been leased for many years and which is situated in the same locality) has been transferred to the new Domain Board to assist in the completion of the improvements it has in hand.
- (10) An area of 1 acre 3 roods 7·8 perches in the Town of Enner Glynn, Nelson, comprising two small reserves vested in the Crown on the subdivision of private property. The Board which has been appointed has already carried out a considerable amount of work in the way of fencing and the erection of playground apparatus, and proposes to plant native trees and shrubs as funds become available.
- (11) An area of 8 acres at Dovedale, Nelson. This area was purchased many years ago by the local residents for recreation purposes, but was recently transferred to the Crown in order that it might be constituted as a public domain. A Board has been appointed, and the Department has made a grant of £100 for improvements.
- (12) An area of 1 rood 30 perches at Waikari, North Canterbury. This land became vested in the Crown as a public reserve on the subdivision of the Town of Waikari Extension No. 1, and has been made a public domain on the application of the Waipara County Council, which proposes to plant shelter-belts and generally beautify the area.
- (13) An area of 11 acres and 22 perches at Drummond, Southland. This reserve was originally portion of a gravel reserve vested in the Wallace County Council, which agreed to the reservation being changed in order to provide a recreation-ground for the district. A Board of local residents has been appointed to control the new domain.

Additions to existing domains were made as follows :—

Land District.				Domain.			Area added.		
							A.	R.	P.
North Auckland	..	..	..	Laingholm	..	..	0	1	0
"	..	..	..	Kaitaia	..	..	2	3	19·9
"	..	..	..	Massey Park	..	..	1	3	0
Auckland	..	..	..	Kaihere	..	..	5	2	24
"	..	..	..	Ohope Beach	..	..	185	2	22·1
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	Woodville	..	..	45	2	0
Taranaki	..	..	..	Puniwhakau	..	..	0	1	0
Wellington	..	..	..	Waverley	..	..	1	3	13·49
"	..	..	..	Featherston	..	..	0	0	20*
"	..	..	..	Eastbourne	..	..	51	3	22·3
"	..	..	..	Wanganui River Trust	..	..	0	3	31·32*
"	..	..	..	Pahiatua	..	..	0	3	33
"	..	..	..	Otaki	..	..	1	1	31
Marlborough	..	..	..	Ngakuta	..	..	3	0	0
Canterbury	..	..	..	Huntsbury	..	..	4	1	37·7
"	..	..	..	Mount Pleasant	..	..	0	3	38
"	..	..	..	Ouruhia	..	..	0	0	13·1
"	..	..	..	Templeton	..	..	6	2	16
"	..	..	..	Little River	..	..	0	0	8·2
Otago	..	..	..	Green Island	..	..	2	1	26·4
"	..	..	..	Ranfurly	..	..	9	0	34
Total area added to twenty-one domains				..	..	..	371	0	2·51

* Closed road and street areas.

The areas added to the Massey Park, Pahiataua, and Otaki Domains were dealt with by special legislation. Section 24 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1939, added part of Allotment 73, Village of Waiuku, to the Massey Park Domain. This area of 1 acre 3 roods was at one time part of the domain. It was severed from the main portion of the reserve by the Waiuku Railway-station, and in 1927 the reservation was cancelled by special legislation and the area declared available for sale for cash under the provisions of the Land Act. The sale of the land, however, was not proceeded with, and the Domain Board (the Waiuku Town Board) expressed the wish to have it reincluded in the domain as it was desired to develop it for use for tennis and croquet. The land could not be reserved in the usual manner on account of the stipulation that it should be sold for cash, and special legislation was therefore necessary to add it to the domain. Section 4 of the Act added Lots 199 and 206, D.P. 325, to the Pahiataua Domain. This area of 3 roods 33 perches situated on the town side of the bridge across the Mangatainoka River and alongside the main road to the railway-station was owned by the Pahiataua Borough Council. The Council, acting as a Domain Board, controls the Pahiataua Domain of some 14 acres, but river erosion had reduced the area suitable for recreation to about 2 acres. There was a considerable sum standing to the credit of the domain account, and as the money could not be spent to any advantage on the existing domain the Council desired to utilize it towards meeting the cost of laying out the area at the bridge in lawns, gardens, and rockeries. In order that this might be done it was necessary that the land should be added to the domain, but as the area was acquired by the Council for purposes other than those of recreation special legislation was required to transfer the land to the Crown as an addition to the Pahiataua Domain. Section 18 of the Act added an area of 1 acre 1 rood 31·7 perches to the Otaki Domain. The area concerned formed part of a block of land in Otaki Borough acquired by the Crown under the provisions of the Housing Act, 1919. It was arranged with the Council that the area, in accordance with the terms of the Council's consent to the subdivisional plan, should be added to the Otaki Domain, which is controlled by the Council in its capacity as a Domain Board. The land was not required for housing, but as it was subject to the Housing Act special legislation was necessary to complete the arrangement entered into with the Council.

Brief mention may be made of some of the more interesting of the other additional areas dealt with during the year :—

Areas totalling 185 acres 2 roods 22·1 perches were added to the Ohope Beach Domain, comprising an area of 143 acres 1 rood 27 perches (portion of the Ngatiawa Native Land Development Block) acquired by this Department from the Native Department and an area of 42 acres and 35·1 perches transferred to the Crown by the Whakatane County Council. This domain, with its original beach area of about 2 acres and a background of native bush on the newly acquired areas, is now a magnificent reserve.

An area of 45 acres 2 roods near the northern end of the Manawatu Gorge and lying between the river and the Manga-atua Stream was added to the Woodville Domain. This land became available for reservation on the forfeiture of a deferred-payment license.

The Wanganui River Trust Domain Board purchased two very desirable areas of 30 acres and 15 acres at Atene, on the Wanganui River, and on completion of the transfers to the Crown the areas became part of the domain.

An area of 51 acres 2 roods 35·32 perches in the Eastbourne Borough was purchased and added to the local domain. The purchase price was £600, of which £200 was found by the Department, while the Borough Council and the Bruce Trustees contributed the remainder in equal shares. The new area will be an acceptable addition to the domain, which now comprises about 850 acres extending from the shores of Wellington Harbour over the ridge into Gollans Valley. Several tracks have been laid out through the domain to Butterfly Creek, which is one of the most popular picnic spots in the district.

The reservation for gravel-pit purposes over an area of 6 acres 2 roods 16 perches on the Main South Road at Islington was changed to recreation purposes during the year with the approval of the Paparua County Council, and the land added to the Templeton Domain. The domain now comprises recreation-grounds in Templeton, Islington, Hornby, and Yaldhurst, a children's playground in Hornby, and a large area which has been leased to the Templeton Country Club.

An area of 9 acres and 34 perches of Crown land in the Town of Ranfurly was reserved and added to the Ranfurly Domain. The land is traversed by a creek which feeds a pond constructed many years ago and used for skating and other winter sports, which are extremely popular in the district. The pond is being enlarged so as to increase the ice area in the winter months.

An area of slightly over 18 acres of the Hamilton Domain was taken for housing purposes during the year. The land concerned was part of the endowment portion of the domain, and was not required for recreation. An amount decided upon by means of a special Government valuation was paid by the Housing Construction Department and made available to the Domain Board for expenditure on the remainder of the domain.

The reservation over the Puketitiri Domain was cancelled and the land sold for cash. The sale proceeds are being paid to the Hutchinson Domain Board for expenditure on the new Hutchinson Domain.

An area of 14 acres 3 roods of the Whatapaka Domain was set apart during the year under the Public Works Act for the use of the Kingseat Mental Hospital. The greater portion of the area is required for sites for houses to accommodate the staff of the hospital, and the remainder for an access road. The Domain Board (the Franklin County Council) consented to the taking of the land on condition that any compensation paid is set aside to provide for the purchase of other land for recreation purposes in the district. Full compensation is being paid by the Public Works Department for the area taken, and this Department is endeavouring to arrange for the acquisition of a recreation-ground to meet the requirements of the district.

At the request of the people concerned, the appointment of the Tui Domain Board was revoked during the year. The domain comprises an area of 6 acres 3 roods at Aotuhia, in the Whangamomona district. It was set aside in 1931, but as settlement has not progressed as expected in the locality it has not proved possible to arrange for a continuance of local control. The domain will now be controlled by the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

In 1937 the Department made arrangements for the reservation of an area of approximately 5 acres near National Park to provide a recreation-ground for the employees of sawmilling firms operating in the district. The reserve was called the Ngauruhoe Public Domain, and was placed under the control of a Domain Board of local residents. No work has been carried out on the area, and it transpires that the principal milling company is making its own arrangements for the recreation of its employees. Under the circumstances, the appointment of the Ngauruhoe Public Domain Board was revoked during the year. The land will be utilized as a public-school site in future, and arrangements are being made to change the purpose of the reservation accordingly.

Orders in Council were issued appointing seventy-five Domain Boards to control domains for further terms, while one hundred and twenty vacancies on various Boards were filled by the appointment of suitable persons. In nine cases additional members were also appointed to Domain Boards.

The Mata-a-vai and Kororareka Domains were united to form one public domain.

A Warrant was issued increasing the number of days on which charges may be made for admission to the Taihape Oval Domain from twenty days to thirty days during the year ending 31st March, 1940.

Permission was granted in fourteen cases for Domain Boards to increase the charges for admission to their domains during the year. Three sets of by-laws were approved, and permission given in fourteen cases to the setting-aside of camping-grounds and parking-places in domains.

Under the provisions of section 13 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1932, rental concessions to lessees of domain lands were granted in seven cases. Numerous leasing proposals were again submitted by Domain Boards and fully investigated by the Department.

A Warrant was issued authorizing the erection of a public hall on a suitable site within the Laingholm Domain.

The sum of £1,135 was expended by the Department in the acquisition of land for domain purposes during the year. The principal cases dealt with were—

- (a) Purchase of 5 acres for a recreation-ground in Ngatea at a cost of £250.
- (b) Acquisition of 41 acres at Hot-water Beach, Whenuakite, on the coast of Coromandel Peninsula, at a cost of £350.
- (c) Acquisition of 655 acres at Orokawa Bay, Bay of Plenty, at a cost of £400.

Full particulars of these areas will be given in next year's report.

Grants and subsidies totalling £2,153 for various improvement purposes were granted to thirty-two Domain Boards during the year, while arrangements were also made for the diversion of funds standing to the credit of certain domains for use on other domains less happily endowed.

The Christchurch Domain Board, which controls the areas known as Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens, comprises representatives of the Government, the City Council, and adjacent local authorities appointed pursuant to the Christchurch Domains Amendment Act, 1913. In order to assist in providing finance for the Board, provision was made by sections 8 and 9 of the Act for the constitution by Order in Council of a Christchurch Domains District and for contributions to the Domain Board by the local bodies situated within the boundaries of such district. It was stipulated that the domains district was to include the City of Christchurch and such other parts of Canterbury Province within a radius of ten miles of the Chief Post Office in the city as the Governor might determine. By section 10 of the Act provision was made for the appointment of a Commissioner to inquire and report to the Governor regarding the boundaries of the district and the amount that should be paid to the Board by the contributory local authorities. In 1914 the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, was appointed a Commissioner under section 10, and by an Order in Council dated the 5th October, 1914, the boundaries of the domains district were constituted. The proportions to be paid by the various local authorities were determined by a Warrant dated the 7th October, 1914. The Warrant set out the total contribution as £2,500, being the maximum amount at that time authorized by the statute. Section 2 of the Christchurch Domains Amendment Act, 1923, increased the total to £5,000, with a proviso, however, that no local authority need pay a larger amount than could be apportioned to it if the amount of the Board's estimated requirements were £3,500. This amendment was further amended by the Christchurch Domains Amendment Act, 1937, which repealed the proviso, and since then the Board has levied the whole amount of £5,000 on the contributory local authorities on the basis set out in the 1914 Warrant.

Early in 1939 the Domain Board advised that one or two of the contributing local bodies had expressed the opinion that a new Warrant should be issued fixing the proportions to be paid by the various bodies. In view of the length of time since the previous determination, and owing to the material changes around Christchurch since 1914, it was considered desirable that the whole matter should be reviewed, and Mr. E. C. Levvey, S.M., was appointed as a Commissioner to inquire and report in terms of section 10 of the Christchurch Domains Amendment Act, 1913, as to what portions of the provincial district should be included in the Christchurch Domains District, and what portion of the cost of improvement and management of the domain should be provided by each of the contributory local authorities. After due inquiries the Commissioner presented a report recommending that the domains district should comprise the City of Christchurch and such other parts of the provincial district as are within a radius of ten miles of the principal post-office in the city, and that the allocation of the total contribution should be made on a population basis. The recommendations of the Commissioner were adopted, and a warrant dated the 16th August, 1939, was thereupon issued.

determining that from and after the 1st April, 1940, the amount required for the improvement and proper maintenance to the Christchurch Domains during any financial year should be borne by the contributory local authorities in the following proportions :—

Christchurch City Council	..	..	..	..	..	3423/5000
Waimairi County Council	..	..	..	..	..	535/5000
Heathcote County Council	..	..	..	..	..	219/5000
Riccarton Borough Council	..	..	..	..	..	202/5000
Paparua County Council	..	..	..	..	..	128/5000
Halswell County Council	..	..	..	..	..	62/5000
Sumner Borough Council	..	..	..	..	..	120/5000
Lyttelton Borough Council	..	..	..	..	..	117/5000
New Brighton Borough Council	..	..	..	..	..	194/5000

In addition to the cases referred to above connected with the addition of areas to existing domains by means of special legislation, the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1939, also dealt with several other matters affecting public domains and Domain Boards. Section 10 of the Act, introduced with the approval of the Audit Department, validated a certain payment made by the Prebbleton Domain Board to one of its members.

Section 11 modified the conditions governing the use of part of the Auckland Domain during the year 1940. The domain is vested in the City Council under the Auckland Domain Vesting Act, 1893. The Act provides that the Council may charge for admission to the cricket-ground on not more than twenty days in any year and on not more than three consecutive days at a time. The maximum charge for admission is fixed by the Act at 1s. for each person. It was necessary during the Centennial celebrations to use the domain for various special functions, and unless the restrictions imposed by the 1893 Act had been relaxed it would have been impossible for some of the outstanding functions to have been held on the domain. The legislation therefore empowered the Council to make charges up to 2s. per head for admission to the domain on an unlimited number of days during 1940, and also absolved the Council from complying with the provision of the old Act in regard to advertising twice a week for at least two consecutive weeks the prices to be charged for admission to the domain.

Section 13 validated the payment of certain fees to the Temuka Progress League, and empowered the Temuka Domain to make certain payments to that body. In this case, as a result of a conference between the Domain Board, the Progress League, and the South Canterbury Automobile Association, the Board granted the League permission to establish a motor camp on the domain. With the help of private persons, fees from the camp, and a subsidy from the association, a building for campers was erected at a cost of £139 10s., while further sums were later spent on the camp as funds permitted. In September, 1938, the camp was free of debt and was offered to the Domain Board. In view, however, of the excellent work which the League was doing and the satisfactory manner in which the camp was conducted, the Board requested the League to continue in control. The League subsequently acquired for the domain the main building of the Rangitata Bridge construction camp. Including the purchase of the building, the League committed itself to a total expenditure of £350, which amount was guaranteed by private citizens. The League had been collecting certain fees from campers on the domain, and it was proposed to pay off the amount owing on the building from these fees. However, as the buildings were erected on domain land they became the property of the Crown, and there was no authority whereby fees for camping on the reserve could be appropriated by the League or paid to that body. It was considered equitable that the League should be reimbursed for the liabilities incurred in creating a very desirable asset, and the special legislation therefore gave authority for the League to retain the fees already collected from campers on the domain, and empowered the Domain Board to make grants, not exceeding in the aggregate £350, to the League from further camping fees collected.

Section 20 dealt with the exchange of a small portion of the Hamilton Domain for a section owned by the Borough Council, the transaction being arranged between the Domain Board and the Council on the basis of equal values. Under the arrangements entered into an area of 1 acre (Section 350, Town of Hamilton West) of the Domain was to be vested in the local authority as an endowment in aid of the borough funds, while a residential section of 18·4 perches was to be added to the domain. A deep gully ran through the domain land, which could not be used for recreation without extensive and costly filling. The Council undertook to pipe the gully and fill in the section and also an adjoining area of the domain. The section given by the Council in exchange will be available for leasing under the provisions of section 2 of the Hamilton Domains Act, 1911. The special legislation completed the exchange by vesting the Council section in the Crown as an addition to the domain, and by vesting the domain section in the Council as a borough endowment.

Section 22 dealt with the Port Molyneux Reserve, in South Otago. This commonage area of some 559 acres was vested in the Clutha County Council subject to the Port Molyneux Reserves Leasing Act, 1876, Amendment Act, 1880, which empowered the Council to issue leases for any period not exceeding twenty-one years over not more than half of the total area, provided that any land so leased should always be open for the recreation of the public. The Act also provided that the Council might issue yearly licenses to the inhabitants of the Port Molyneux subdivision of the old South Molyneux Road Board District to depasture cattle on the unleased area, and further provided that all moneys received from leasing the land should be devoted to the improvement thereof. The Council accumulated a considerable sum from rents, and could not profitably use the money on the reserve itself, while, in any case, the land was not required for commonage or recreation purposes. It was, however, the Council's desire to establish a camping-ground at Kaka Point, on Willsher Bay, and for that purpose to use some of the funds derived from the Port Molyneux Reserve in the acquisition of a small area of Native land and in the development of the area for use for camping purposes. The land when

acquired was to be vested in the Crown as an addition to the Willsher Domain ; and the Department, with the approval of the Domain Board, undertook to give the Council representation on the Board. The Council also expressed its willingness to make grants from the Port Molyneux funds to Domain and Scenic Boards in the locality, and to assist generally in the acquisition of suitable areas for recreation or scenic purposes. Under the circumstances it was decided to introduce the special legislation, which gave the necessary authority to use the funds in the manner indicated, and also gave the Council power to lease the whole of the reserve, which was declared to be vested in the local body without power of sale but with full power to lease. At the same time the opportunity was taken of repealing the old legislation dealing with the reserve. Since the passing of the special legislation the Department has co-operated with the Council in the acquisition of the land required for the camping-ground at Kaka Point, and the whole matter will shortly be completed.

Section 24 authorized the Auckland City Council to accept a surrender of a lease over a small portion of the Auckland Domain and to grant to the Auckland Bowling Club a new lease of such portion and of another small area of the domain. Under section 33 of the Local Legislation Act, 1927, the Council was authorized to lease an area of 1 acre and 23 perches of the domain to the bowling club, and a lease was subsequently issued with the consent of the Governor-General as required by that legislation. The club applied to the Council for a renewal of its lease for a further term of twenty-one years, and for the inclusion of an additional area of 9.75 perches in order to permit of the construction of another green. The club's lower greens were adversely affected by flooding from storm-water in times of heavy rain, and it was desired to construct a green on higher land. The additional area asked for comprised a small piece of waste land lying between the new Domain Drive and the leased area. The Council, provided it was given the necessary authority, was prepared to renew the club's lease, and to grant a lease over the small additional area. It was thought that the most convenient way would be to surrender the existing lease and to grant a new one covering the whole area. The special legislation therefore authorized the Council to accept a surrender of the old lease, which was for a term of twenty-one years from the 1st April, 1928, and to grant to the club, subject, however, to the consent of the Governor-General, a new lease covering both areas for a term to expire on the 31st March, 1970.

PART II.—NATIONAL PARKS.

No new national-park areas were set aside during the year, nor were any additions made to the existing parks.

A grant of £500 was made to the Egmont National Park Board for general administration and improvement purposes.

A patrolman was again engaged to supervise the areas along the Te Anau - Milford Sound Road. He reports that the public still show a good deal of apathy in regard to the lighting of fires. On several occasions he had to extinguish incipient fires, but was unsuccessful in apprehending the offenders. The wet climatic conditions prevailing throughout the year had a good effect in preventing the spread of fires. The number of campers and visitors was considerably less than during the previous season.

The keeping of dogs in the park area is being satisfactorily kept in check. Cats, however, present a more difficult problem, as numbers of these animals frequenting the locality of public-works camps have run more or less wild. Cats have been noticed on the Milford side of the tunnel, but now that the tunnel heading is through, the patrolman will be able to extend his activities there.

Extracts from the annual reports of the Tongariro, Egmont, and Arthur Pass National Park Boards are appended hereto.

APPENDIX.

REPORTS OF NATIONAL PARK BOARDS.

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK.

(R. G. MACMORRAN, Under-Secretary for Lands, Chairman.)

Two meetings of the Wellington Executive of the Board were held during the year to deal with various matters affecting the park.

On his retirement from the Public Service on 30th June, 1939, Mr. W. Robertson, Under-Secretary for Lands, relinquished his position as Chairman of the Board. Mr. Robertson was first appointed as Chairman on 11th June, 1931, and his services in this capacity were highly appreciated by the Board. He carries with him the best wishes of members for a happy period of retirement. Mr. R. G. Macmorran, the present Under-Secretary for Lands, was appointed to fill the vacancy in terms of section 7 of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922.

Further leave of absence from Board meetings has been extended to Mr. Ormond Wilson, who is at present absent from the Dominion.

It is with regret that the Board records the death during the year of two members—namely, Mr. John Cullen, I.S.O., of Auckland, and Mr. T. A. Blyth, of Ohakune. Mr. John Cullen was Warden of the park, and a member of the Board following on its reconstitution in 1923 by the passing of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922. Mr. Blyth was also a foundation member, having been appointed in January, 1923. Both gentlemen have left behind a very fine record of voluntary work in regard to the administration of the park.

The Manager at the Chateau reports that the use of the park as a holiday resort has been fully maintained during the year despite war conditions and other necessary restrictions.

ELEVATION OF MOUNTAIN CLUB HUTS.

This question was again discussed at a meeting of the Wellington Executive, when it was resolved that the previous determination of the Board not to grant permits to erect huts below the 5,000 ft. level be rescinded. This leaves the Board free to deal with each application on its merits.

RUAPEHU SKI CLUB'S HUT.

The application of the Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.) for authority to extend the club hut on Ruapehu to provide further shelter and sleeping-accommodation was approved by the Board, and the details in regard to approval of plans and specifications of the extension have been referred to a sub-committee. It is the intention of the club to provide for an additional twenty-four bunks for the use of members.

MOUNTAIN HUT FOR ALPINE SPORTS CLUB (INCORPORATED).

The application of the Alpine Sports Club (Inc.) for authority to erect a hut in the valley of the Wangaehu Stream on the eastern slopes of Ruapehu has been approved. The altitude of site selected is approximately 5,500 ft., and the access will be from the Waiouru-Tokaanu Road. Plans and specifications of the hut will be submitted in due course for approval of a sub-committee of the Board, but it is unlikely that the club will proceed with the construction work at present.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ALPINE GARDEN.

A further report on this matter by Dr. Marshall has been submitted, and the question of carrying out further plant-labelling and the construction of pathways through the selected areas will receive attention.

It is also proposed to prepare a detailed scheme of rock gardens for the establishment of suitable specimens of mountain plants.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS.

The mountain road from the Chateau to the skiing grounds on Ruapehu has been completed. The road runs past the Salt Hut to the Punch Bowl and will be a great convenience particularly during the skiing season.

Work on the Bruce Road immediately below the Chateau has also been commenced. The level of the road in this locality is being raised, and this should prevent the snow-drifts blocking the approach to the Chateau in blizzard conditions. In raising the road-level it has been found necessary to remove spoil from the strip of land between the road and the bush. The borrow pits and spoil-banks will be levelled off and the area sown in grass next spring.

ENTRANCE TO PARK AT BRUCE ROAD JUNCTION.

For some time past the Board has recognized the necessity of improving the entrance to the park where the Bruce Road junctions with the main highway. At the meeting held in November last the question was fully discussed, and a sub-committee was set up to go into the details of the matter and arrange for a suitable scheme. An elaborate archway was not considered feasible at the present time, and it was suggested that a suitable layout with rock edges and containing trees and shrubs of the park would be appropriate.

DESTRUCTION OF WILD CATS.

The Department of Internal Affairs has offered the assistance of one of its officers in laying down a system for the trapping and destruction of wild cats and other vermin in the park. The action of the Department in this connection is much appreciated, and the thanks of the Board are recorded.

DEER DESTRUCTION.

Further operations were carried out by officers of the Department of Internal Affairs during the past year. The reports received indicate that there are not a great number of deer in the bush lands of the park.

The following clubs have kindly submitted short accounts of visits of their members to the park during the year under review, and extracts from these accounts are quoted :—

The Alpine Sports Club (Inc.).—My club during the last year has had an organized party of nine members (increasing to twenty at both week-ends) for a ten-day skiing trip to the Whakapapa Huts in August, 1939, and a party of twenty-five members at Ohakune Hut during the Easter holidays of 1940, from 22nd to 25th March. The latter party climbed the Ruapehu peaks and visited Maungaturuturu and other valleys in the vicinity.

Explorations were continued in the Wangaehu district in connection with the proposed hut. In addition, numerous private parties have visited various parts of the park.

Tararua Tramping Club (Inc.).—During the year ended 31st March, 1940, two trips to the National Park area were organized by the Tararua Tramping Club. For the twentieth annual winter sports trip in August there was a total attendance of fifty-four members of the club. The fine weather prevailing gave every member of the party a most enjoyable time. Several members competed with success in the New Zealand Ski Championships.

During Easter, 1940, a party of nineteen members camped near the Ohakune Hut. During this period members made ascents of the various peaks of Mount Ruapehu, including Ruapehu, Parateaitonga, and Girdlestone, and obtained excellent views extending from Lake Taupo to the Spencer Range in the South Island. In addition, members of the club visited the National Park area on various occasions during the year, some on the "Snow Trains" and others during the Christmas vacation. During the Christmas period a small party climbed all three mountains in the park area.

Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.).—The snow was late in coming at the National Park, but the precipitation was unusually heavy and on many occasions the foothills as well as the high slopes were well covered. Largely owing to the relative absence of wind during the falls, the snow remained on the mountain.

During July and early August weather conditions were not conducive to much activity, and the very deep loose snow made travel difficult even on skis. Later, however, conditions improved greatly and excellent skiing and touring were obtainable. Reasonably good skiing conditions were obtainable on the Whakapapa face of the mountain practically right through the balance of the year.

There was a noticeable absence of the crevasses on the Whakapapa Glacier, which were such a feature of the past two seasons.

The Club's Winter Sports Tournament, which was held in August in conjunction with the Dominion Championship, was the largest to date, some one hundred and twenty members taking part.

Although the incidence of war and later the petrol restrictions somewhat reduced club activities, large parties were on the mountain on every holiday, and many small parties based on the hut visited the mountain on other occasions. Exploration in detail of many parts of the mountain was undertaken. In particular, work was undertaken on the mapping of the summit ridges, and an investigation was made of the outlets of the Crater Lake.

EGMONT NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. C. WESTON, Chairman.)

I have the honour to present the Egmont National Park Board's report for the year ending 31st March, 1940.

Under war conditions it is felt that the Board's activities must be confined to essentials. The main work is the destruction of goats in the reserve, the protection of the forest from straying cattle, and the prevention of poaching.

The year has been a busy one for the Ranger, Mr. N. P. Gibson, who reports that for the year ending 31st March, 1,050 goats have been destroyed, 233 of this number being shot by the Board's honorary Rangers. There were 3,250 opossums trapped under royalty; also 450 rats, 187 weasels, and 6 cats trapped. Fourteen head of wild cattle on the southern slopes and deep in the forest were destroyed. Where beasts get into the reserve through fences broken down by fallen trees or other causes, the Ranger assists settlers to remove their cattle rather than destroy them. Where cattle are deliberately allowed to trespass, they are shot. Two maimed kiwis were doctored, and released back again into the reserves in a healthy condition.

At the commencement of the war the work of pruning and thinning the *pinus insignis* forest of about 300 acres was stopped. This work must necessarily be postponed until the termination of the war.

During the year, and acting under the advice of the Taranaki alpine clubs, the Board has placed in each of the three mountain hostels a complete alpine equipment to be used only in emergency. This equipment is in the special charge of the hostel-managers.

The question of the upkeep of the roads within the reserve is still unsettled. This is a responsibility which the Highways Board might well and should assume.

Finance during the war has been the Board's major problem. The Minister in Charge, the Hon. F. Langstone, has given generous help under all the circumstances during the year. With this it has been possible to maintain all the necessary activities for the protection of the reserve.

The Board's thanks are due to our Minister, the Hon. Mr. Langstone, for his interest and help; to the Committees in charge of the hostels for their continued good will, which has brought many tourists and visitors to Taranaki; and to the many local bodies surrounding Egmont for their very welcome annual grants for the upkeep of the park. The various alpine clubs have more than done their share. Not only have their members continued their help and interest in the protection of the reserve, but have provided from their ranks a very useful number of experienced mountaineers for the Expeditionary Forces. Lastly, thanks are due to Mr. N. P. Gibson, our Ranger, for his work at all hours and in all weathers in controlling our area of nearly 80,000 acres.

ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, Chairman.)

Financial.—As a result of a canvass of the various local bodies the previous year, some donations to the Board's funds have been received during the past year. However, as anticipated in the last report, the result has proved somewhat disappointing, but the Board extends its thanks to those local bodies which made donations, and particularly to the Christchurch City Council, which has again donated £50 to the funds.

Personnel.—Mr. W. Rodgers has retired from the position of District Traffic Manager of the New Zealand Railways at Christchurch, and has been succeeded by Mr. G. H. McLean, who will take Mr. Rodgers' place on the Board. Mr. C. Biggs has succeeded Mr. F. W. Foster as Conservator of State Forests at Hokitika and will take Mr. Foster's seat on the Board. The Board has also lost the services of Mr. W. A. Kennedy, who has been a member since 1932, and who has resigned his seat following the disposal of his property at the Pass.

Ranger.—Early in the year Mr. Evan Wilson resigned his position as Ranger, and the Executive Committee appointed Mr. Conrad Hodgkinson to the position. Mr. Hodgkinson has had considerable experience in bush and mountainous regions, and is proving an efficient and conscientious officer.

Sports.—The Railways Department organized five excursions to the Pass during the winter months, and these carried approximately twelve hundred people. In addition, one of the Railways Department's "Mystery Hikes," carrying just over one thousand people destined for tramping in the Cass district, proceeded on to the Arthur Pass Township on account of the inclement weather at Cass. The park, providing as it does excellent scope for mountaineering and skiing, continues to be popular with the various tramping, mountaineering, and ski clubs operating in Canterbury and Westland.

Township.—Rents continue to be paid promptly and the arrears are small. There have been several transfers of sections in the township.

The groyne in the Bealey River which were completed by the Public Works Department last winter have until recently functioned satisfactorily. At the end of February, however, floods in the Bealey River, probably the largest experienced in the district, washed out the approaches to the Bealey Bridge at the township, carried away the bridge recently erected over the Punch Bowl Creek, and threatened serious damage to the township by flooding and erosion. Temporary relief measures were taken by the Ranger with the assistance of residents, and in response to representations made by the Board the Public Works Department has arranged for the necessary protective works to be undertaken by the Main Highways Board.

Appreciation.—The thanks of the Board are due to the Railways Department for the friendly co-operation of its officers; the public press for the publicity accorded the Board; to the District Engineers and staff of the Public Works Department in Canterbury and Westland for courteous co-operation and advice freely given; to Mr. E. M. Wilson, the Ranger for the first part of the year, and to Mr. C. Hodgkinson, the Ranger for the greater portion of the term, and to the honorary Rangers, who have continued to display a keen interest in the affairs of the Board. It is reported with regret that Mr. R. Scott, an honorary Ranger, who, with Mrs. Scott, has given valuable assistance to the Board, has now been transferred from Arthurs Pass.

The report of the Grounds Committee, which has been prepared by Mr. McKay and which is submitted herewith, covers the principal works of the Board in the park for the year:—

Weather Conditions.—These have again been unusually bad throughout the year, causing outdoor work to be severely hampered. Nevertheless, not only have existing tracks been well attended to, but opportunity has been taken, when available, of carrying out several new and useful works, among which the following may be enumerated—

"(1) *Edwards River Track* begins at a point about one and a half miles above the junction of this stream with the Mingha. It has been formed for a distance of approximately three and a half miles, till it emerges on to the open country. This track, by dispensing with the necessity of crossing and recrossing river-beds, should prove of great help to trampers. It opens up the high country lying between the basins of the Taramakau and Waimakariri Rivers, and gives access to many interesting peaks and passes. The Canterbury Mountaineering Club have expressed their intention of erecting a small bivouac at the head of the Edwards River.

"(2) *Mount Temple Basin*: The difficulty of providing a safer route over the high bluff to the ski ground has been overcome by extensive benching, entailing the use of explosives. Additional safety has been secured at the most dangerous corner by the use of iron standards carrying stout wire supports.

“(3) *Approach to Punch Bowl*: Most visitors, after admiring this wonderful waterfall from a distance, become desirous of a closer view, so that many attempts have been made in the past to maintain a track up the long rough creek-bed. Shifting debris brought down by floods have always thwarted these plans. A well-graded track is now being opened up by way of Aicken’s Spur, from which it leads by a graded descent to the Bowl. This route has necessitated the building of a small bridge over Punch Bowl Creek.

“*Harper’s Pass Track*.—In connection with the physical-welfare movement, the Department of Internal Affairs has constructed a track over Harper’s Pass and down the Taramakau River on its southern bank. A hut has been built on a suitable site. As these lie almost entirely within the park boundary, the Board feels grateful to the Department for the further facilities created and for the publicity that must follow such work. The Department has already conducted a successful tramping party through this track.

“*Alpine Rock Garden*.—The new Ranger has displayed considerable interest in this work, filling in much of his odd time in attending to the plants and in general maintenance. Visiting botanists from Dunedin University and other centres have commented favourably on the representative collection of alpine plants from the park area. It would be well here to emphasize that this garden has been made not solely for purposes of floristic display, but as a means of establishing a complete botanical collection, including even the most sombre of “alpines.”

“*Animal Pests*.—The Ranger reports that within the park deer and chamois are abundant, but is of opinion that by far the greater damage is being done by the latter. Herds of considerable numbers are frequently seen throughout the higher levels. The Ranger makes a practice of examining the contents of the stomachs of all animals killed. In the case of the chamois these contents invariably consist of alpine herbs, with little or no grass, while in the case of deer the only evidence is of grass-feeding. It is the Ranger’s opinion that the menace of the chamois towards alpine vegetation will continue to increase.

“*Speeding within Township*.—Repeated complaints having been received from residents and visitors regarding motorists speeding heedlessly through the settlement, protests were made to the highway authorities, as a result of which warning notices have been erected at each end of the settlement. This measure has unfortunately not been successful, and inquiries are being made as to whether further action can be taken to abate the nuisance.”

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