

1947
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, 30th June, 1947.

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, 1947.

I have, &c.,

D. M. GREIG,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

REPORT

PART I.—PUBLIC DOMAINS

WHILE no great increase in the area of public domain lands has taken place during the past year, there has been a further commendable improvement in the interest and enthusiasm displayed by the controlling Boards and the public generally. This is reflected in the numerous applications for financial assistance that have been received. Unfortunately, shortage of labour and materials has necessitated some of the larger development projects being held over. In other cases the enthusiasm of Boards has enabled extensive improvements to be effected, labour being furnished by Board members and local residents, while Government assistance has been provided by way of supervision, grants, and subsidies.

Another pleasing feature is the greater use which the public are making of camping facilities provided on domain areas. In many instances Domain Boards have greatly improved and modernized camping-grounds to conform with present-day requirements. More time for recreation and leisure, together with improved petrol-supplies, has been reflected in the increased use of existing domains, and in the general desire to acquire suitable areas for domain purposes. The willingness of residents to assist in providing funds for the purchase of suitable areas and in supplying labour for improvements is very commendable.

The Department has given close attention during the year to the leasing of the grazing-rights of domain areas. The former policy of leasing by tender has been dropped in favour of calling public applications for lease at a fixed rental, the lessee being decided by ballot, with a preference to ex-servicemen. Grazing in most cases is restricted to sheep and to periods when the domain is not required for sports purposes. Where the Boards concerned have a long-term grassing programme in view leases for cropping are granted with a condition that, on expiry, the lessee must hand over the leased areas sown down in approved pasture.

At 31st March, 1947, the total number of public domains administered under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, was 820, covering a total of 80,006 acres. Of these, 43 domains are controlled by the various Commissioners of Crown Lands, 303 are administered by local authorities, acting as Domain Boards, while the remaining 474 are under local Boards.

Five new domains—Waipori Falls, Te Toro, Whangarei Falls, Tainui, and Hatea-a-Rangi Park—were constituted during the year, and suitable arrangements were made for their control.

The Waipori Falls Domain, comprising 6½ acres, is situated at Waipori, some 36 miles south-west from Dunedin. It was constituted to provide a recreation area for the employees at the Waipori Falls Power-house and their children.

The Te Toro Domain contains 13 acres and is near Waiuku, some 40 miles south-west of Auckland, and is a popular picnic-ground on the Manukau Harbour foreshore.

The Whangarei Falls Domain, of 18 acres, is situated alongside the falls of that name, and is one of the beauty spots of the north. Funds of £1,000 for the purchase of the area were subscribed locally so that the falls and the surrounding land might be preserved for public enjoyment.

The Tainui Domain is in Raglan, 119 miles south-west from Auckland, 3½ acres in area. This domain fronts the harbour and is being developed as a picnic spot by the Raglan County Council in its capacity as the Domain Board.

The new Hatea-a-Rangi Park Domain is in Tokomaru Bay Township. It is 2½ acres in area, and is used for general recreational purposes.

Additions totalling nearly 16 acres were made to three existing Domains, those concerned being Alfredton (12 miles from Eketahuna), River View (near Murchison), and Clayton (9 miles from Fairlie). The Tapanui and Whiskey Gully Domains were united, the name Tapanui being retained. These areas are 96 miles south-west from Dunedin.

Transit Housing on Public Domains.—The use of portions of public domains for transit-housing purposes has given the Department a great deal of concern. It has been ascertained that, under the authority of the Local Authorities (Temporary Housing) Emergency Regulations 1944, transit housing centres have been established on the Auckland, Makaraka (Gisborne), Tauranga, Rotorua, and Huatoki (New Plymouth) Domains, while proposals are under consideration for the use of portions of the Mount Victoria (Devonport), Te Kuiti, and Taihape Domains for the same purpose. In some of these cases service buildings of various kinds were erected on the domains concerned during the war, and have now been converted on the site into transit-centre buildings; in others, service buildings have been transferred from other sites to the domains. The Department realizes the serious nature of the housing position in general, and also that transit centres are regarded as temporary expedients. At the same time it feels very strongly that public-domain land should not be used for this purpose for a moment longer than absolutely necessary, and that every care should be taken to see that the areas concerned are restored to their proper use at the earliest possible opportunity.

PART II.—NATIONAL PARKS

Our national park areas, some of the Dominions greatest scenic and recreational assets, have been efficiently administered by the various controlling authorities. Since the war ended plans for further extensive development have been drawn up and put into effect wherever possible. Labour shortages and difficulty in obtaining materials have been retarding factors.

A grant of £2,500 was made to the Tongariro National Park Board to enable permanent accommodation to be provided for a ranger, and an annual grant of £800 for expenses of management has also been approved. Repairs to some of the tracks have been effected, and deer-culling is being undertaken by the Wildlife Branch of the Internal Affairs Department.

An area of 574 acres at Torrent Bay has been purchased, at a cost of £200, for addition to the Abel Tasman National Park, bringing the total area of the Park to 38,386 acres.

During the year the Egmont National Park Board carried out maintenance works and proceeded with its improvement scheme. The Government grant to the Board on the basis of £2 for every £1 contributed by the local bodies amounted to £2,358 8s. 10d. These funds are used for general administration purposes.

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