

1915.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY:
PUBLIC DOMAINS OF NEW ZEALAND

(ANNUAL REPORT ON).

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

The UNDER-SECRETARY FOR LANDS to the Right Hon. MINISTER OF LANDS.

SIR,

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 29th July, 1915.

I have the honour to report on the Public Domains of the Dominion for the year ended 31st December, 1914.

There are now 561 public domains, comprising a total area of 85,054 acres, including the Wanganui River Trust Domain of 33,000 acres. During the term under review the Te Awamutu and Puniu Domains were amalgamated for administrative purposes, and the Dunstan and Oraukura Domains were freed from reservation. With the exception of fifty-one, which are controlled by the Commissioners of Crown Lands, all the domains are administered by local Domain Boards, and from the reports furnished in terms of section 45 of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, 1908, it is quite apparent that, generally speaking, the gradual improvement of the domains for public use is progressing satisfactorily. In a few cases reports for the year 1914 have not yet come to hand, but in these cases inquiries are being made with a view to ensuring compliance with the law.

I may mention that members of Domain Boards perform their duties, which are at times somewhat onerous, quite gratuitously. The work is done willingly and without ostentation, and the only reward obtained or expected is a knowledge of duty well done.

It has been the custom in the past to give small grants to assist Boards in making the areas under their control suitable for the purpose for which they were provided, but it is evident that such assistance must now cease or be restricted to works of the most pressing nature, such as river-encroachment. Boards with slender finances will therefore have to depend on such help as can be obtained from local bodies, sports clubs, and private persons, and from working-bees. The latter, if well organized and enthusiastically taken up, will quickly convert a rough area into a suitable place of recreation.

The Department has on record a case where a public hall was needed. A movement was started with the object of building one on the local domain. Subscription-lists were circulated, on which the residents could give either money, material, or labour. The movement was well supported, with the result that a substantial hall was provided on the domain free of debt.

The Department continues to afford Domain Boards with all available assistance and advice on matters relating to the control and management of the lands under their control. Model by-laws have also been framed for their guidance, and copies of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, 1908, and its amendments are supplied on application.

Owing to the necessity for economy it has been decided to refrain from printing a synopsis of the report of each Domain Board in accordance with the usual custom.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MACKENZIE, Under-Secretary.

The Right Hon. W. F. Massey, P.C., Minister of Lands.

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