

SESSION II.
1923.
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

SIR,

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 20th June, 1923.

I have the honour to report on the public domains of the Dominion for the year ended 31st March, 1923.

The domains administered under Part II of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, 1908, now number 634, comprising a total area of 73,017 acres. Included in this area is the Wanganui River Trust Domain of some 24,000 acres.

Forty-eight domains are controlled by the various Commissioners of Crown Lands, and the remainder by local Domain Boards appointed from time to time. It has been found difficult in certain country districts to obtain the services of local Domain Boards; but, generally speaking, the public take a very real and keen interest in the management of the areas set apart for their recreation and enjoyment. This is well shown by the large amount of voluntary labour carried out on our domains.

Thirteen new domains, totalling 313 acres, were constituted during the year. Ten of these have been placed under local control, and arrangements are being made in the other cases.

Various domain matters were dealt with in the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1922. To provide for more effective control, the Rangaunu, Patutahi Town, and Happy Valley Domains were amalgamated with the Kaimaumu, Patutahi, and Waikaia Domains respectively. Authority was granted the Ashley Domain Board to apply its revenues towards the cost of protecting the northern bank of the Ashley River. The Clayton Domain was found to be not particularly well adapted for recreation purposes, and an exchange for a more suitable area was authorized. Authority was granted for the issue of building leases over portion of the Rangiora and Waikuku Beach Domain. This domain, which contains an area of 305 acres situated on the sea-coast east of Rangiora, is a favourite resort for campers and picnickers. An area of about 20 acres has now been set aside for week-end cottages, &c., and the Domain Board will be in a better position to generally superintend the layout and use of this portion. Provision was made enabling the Taihape Borough Council to borrow up to £4,000 for improving and equipping the Taihape Oval Domain for athletics, shows, &c. An area of 17 acres 3 roods 29 perches in Pipiriki Township, known as Pukenu Hill, was declared to be a public domain and added to the Wanganui River Trust Domain. The reservation over a lighthouse-site in the Town of Waikouaiti was cancelled, and the land, some 16 acres, added to the Karitane Domain. Arrangements were authorized for the exchange of portion of the Whakatane Domain for an adjoining area. It is proposed to sell part of the domain, the proceeds to be applied towards the purchase of a new school-site, while the old school-site is to be added to the domain. In connection with a proposal to take an area at Hamilton Lake for domain purposes, provision was made for the disposal of two small sections of the domain to raise necessary funds. Part of the Huatoki Domain was found unsuitable for recreation, being severed by a stream from the remainder. It was removed from the domain, and a more suitable area added in its place. As no interest has been shown in the Waitewhena Domain, steps were taken to cancel the reservation and declare the area Crown land available for disposal under the Land Act, 1908.

Three warrants under section 2 of the Public Reserves and Domains Amendment Act, 1921, authorizing charges for admission on fifteen days in a year, were issued during the year. As this provision becomes better known, and the advantages it offers to sports and games more fully recognized, it is anticipated that there will be a material increase in applications received for permission to levy admission charges on the full number of days allowed.

A few Boards have failed to furnish the annual reports required by law, and suitable action to enforce requirements will be taken where necessary. The great majority of reports, however, come to hand promptly, and their perusal serves to show what a great and increasingly valuable asset the Dominion possesses in its public domains. A considerable number of applications for grants and subsidies were received during the year, but under prevailing conditions it is only in very exceptional cases that Government aid can be granted. This fact is becoming more widely recognized, and various Boards are displaying commendable activity in raising funds in other ways for the improvement and development of the domains under their charge.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (575 copies) £1 12s. 6d.

Price 3d.]

By Authority: W. A. G. SKINNER, Government Printer, Wellington.—1923.