

Domain. The latter domain will not be required for recreation for some years, and in the meantime some of its funds can profitably be employed in certain improvements required on the former. The Otahuhu Borough Council was empowered to expend funds derived from portion of the Otahuhu Domain under its control on certain other land acquired by the Council for recreation purposes. Further provision was made in connection with the payment of compensation and expenses involved in the taking of an area at Hamilton Lake for recreation. A railway quarry and a quarry acquired by the Gisborne Borough Council were declared public domains, subject, however, to the reservation of the right to remove stone at any time. A portion of the Eketahuna Domain which was unsuitable for recreation was set apart for a public cemetery. An unused cemetery reserve is being added to the domain in its place. The Ashhurst Domain Board was authorized to contribute towards the erection of a cottage on the Ashhurst Public Cemetery. The cottage will be occupied by the caretaker of the Domain, who also carries out the duties of sexton. Authority was granted the Levin Borough Council to expend on the Levin Park Domain certain funds derived by it in its capacity as the Levin Domain Board. Provision was made for the extension for a short period of the term of appointment of the Christchurch Domain Board. The area of Reserve 3231 (portion of the Ashley Gorge Domain), as published in the instruments of reservation, &c., was found to be considerably short of the actual area within the boundaries as originally defined. These boundaries have been considerably altered as the result of recent surveys, and under all the circumstances it was found necessary to redefine the boundaries of the domain. An area of 2 roods 7.6 perches of the Christchurch Domain was vested, subject to certain conditions, in the City Corporation as a site for a public art gallery. Section 66 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1920, authorized the Mount Somers Domain Board to contribute £700 towards the erection of a War Memorial Hall on the domain. Permission has now been granted to increase the contribution to £800, which will allow of the liquidation of the existing debt. The Board has in hand ample funds which are not required for expenditure on the domain in other ways. The reservation over the Ohiwa Domain, Opotiki district, was cancelled and the land declared available for disposal under the Land Act. This area was useless for recreation purposes.

By section 21 (7) of the Ashley River Improvement Act, 1925, the Ashley River Trust constituted under that Act was appointed as the Ashley Domain Board in succession to the Sefton-Ashley Drainage Board, which body previously held the appointment.

A local Act affecting a public domain was the Rawhiti Domain Act, 1925. This Act provided that leases under the Public Bodies' Leases Act might be granted over a small portion of the Rawhiti Domain, New Brighton, the revenue derived therefrom to be expended on the improvement or extension of the domain.

Orders in Council were issued appointing thirty Boards to control domains for further terms. Over eighty vacancies on some sixty-two Domain Boards were filled by the appointment of suitable persons nominated by the residents of the particular districts concerned. A large volume of correspondence was dealt with, not only in connection with appointments, &c., but also with regard to general inquiries on matters of administration, applications for subsidies, leasing of domain areas, charges for admission, &c.

The improvement referred to in last year's report in the matter of furnishing the annual reports required under section 45 of the Act has been maintained. Most of the Boards now appear to recognize that these should be furnished promptly and be filled in as completely as possible.

From time to time applications are received for permission to sell public domains, and with the proceeds to purchase other areas. Where a domain is not used by the public by reason of unsuitable situation or physical features, &c., there is generally no objection to its sale provided another and more suitable area can be obtained at a reasonable figure. Some applications, however, would if granted involve the sale of fairly large areas quite suitable for general recreation purposes, and in place thereof the purchase of very much smaller areas for sports-grounds pure and simple. The Department is prepared to encourage the use of public domains for sports and organized games in every legitimate way, but it cannot recommend the sale of areas that are a pleasure and delight to all sections of the community in order to provide almost solely for the requirements of one or more particular sections.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

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