

1936.
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, 31st August, 1936.

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, 1936.

I have, &c.,

W. ROBERTSON,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. Frank Langstone, Minister of Lands.

REPORT.

PART I.—PUBLIC DOMAINS.

At the 31st March, 1936, the total number of public domains administered under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, was 775, covering a total area of 75,380 acres. Forty-six of these domains are controlled by the various Commissioners of Crown Lands, 273 are controlled by local authorities acting as Domain Boards, while the remaining 456 are under the control of local Boards appointed from time to time.

During the year ten new domains, with a total area of some 225 acres, were reserved and brought under Part II of the Act, and arrangements made for their control. Additions totalling 150 acres were also made to twenty-two existing domains.

One of the additions was that of an area of 2 acres 1 rood 30 perches situated at Putiki Bay, Waiheke Island. This area adjoins an existing portion of the Waiheke Domain, and also two areas of tidal land which it is hoped later on to reclaim and bring in as further additions to the domain. The Waiheke Domain Board (the Ostend Road Board) arranged for the transfer to the Crown of the first-mentioned area in order that it could be reserved for recreation and brought under the Act. Another was that of two areas of 1 acre 0 roods 28·2 perches and 1 acre 2 roods 28·7 perches situated at Pakaraka and Westmere respectively. They have been added to the Nukumarū Domain, and were donated

by Mrs. B. Taylor, of Wanganui, and Mr. H. G. Birch, of Maxwell, for the purposes of public recreation-grounds. Three concrete swimming-pools and two bathing-sheds have been constructed on the Pakaraka area, and a swimming-pool is to be constructed on the Westmere area by the Domain Board—the Waitotara County Council.

Brief mention may be made of some of the new domains constituted during the year as follows: An area of 108 acres of the Parahirahi Block was set aside to provide for recreation requirements in the Kaikohe district. The Kaikohe Town Board, which intends to plant and generally develop the land for recreation, has been entrusted with the control and management of the new domain.

At Kerepechi arrangements were made to set aside an area of 25 acres of Crown land to provide a sports-ground for the district, and the control of the new reserve has been taken over by the Hauraki Plains County Council. Kerepechi is situated in the centre of a large district which will some day be much more thickly populated than it is at present, and as large an area as possible was therefore set aside with a view to making adequate provision for future requirements.

The reservation over the Guthrie Domain in the Rotorua district was cancelled by section 16 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1932, the land being required in connection with a Native-land development scheme. The legislation provided for the setting-aside of a new recreation area to take the place of the old domain, and during the year under review the new domain was duly constituted, an area of over 18 acres having been made available for the purpose out of Native land.

The old Buffalo Domain at Coromandel, which was found to be incapable of development for recreation purposes, has been sold, and the proceeds used towards the purchase of a new area more suitable for a sports-ground. The purchase was rendered possible by reason of the fact that the proceeds from the sale of the old domain were augmented by certain funds that had been made available in Coromandel for the provision of a recreation-ground there.

An area of a little over 6 acres at the mouth of the Waipatiki Stream was made a public domain, together with an area of 29 acres of bush situated a little farther up the stream. The locality is popular, and the beach is a very fine one of yellow sand, probably the best within easy reach of Napier. The Hawke's Bay County Council is represented on the Board of control which has been appointed.

At Kaiteriteri, near Riwaka, an area of 2 acres became vested in the Crown on the subdivision of private property, and was constituted a public domain. The beach in this locality is a good one for bathing, and has become very popular since the new coast road was constructed a few years ago. Bathing-sheds have been erected on the road reserve adjoining the new domain, and arrangements may possibly be made later on to include portion of the road reserve in the domain.

Four areas of Government road lying between the Grove Road and the waters of Queen Charlotte Sound near Picton were stopped, declared Crown land, reserved for recreation purposes, and made a public domain during the year. These areas are favourite picnic spots, and adequate control of camping is very necessary in the public interest. A Domain Board on which there are representatives of the Department, the Marlborough County Council, and the Picton Borough Council has been set up to exercise control.

An exchange was arranged of an area of 2 acres 0 roods 22·5 perches of the Leamington Domain which had been leased to the Cambridge Dairy Company for many years for an area of 2 acres 2 roods of freehold held by the company. Other exchanges completed during the year were of 3 acres of the Puhoi Domain for some 9 acres of freehold, and of 17 acres 1 rood 24 perches of the Eastbourne Domain for 18 acres 2 roods 4 perches of freehold property. In the latter case the area obtained in exchange contains a favourite camping and picnic spot commonly known as Butterfly Creek, and since the arrangements were completed the Eastbourne Borough Council, which is the controlling authority, has greatly improved the track access and generally developed the area for public use.

An area of 62 acres 2 roods of the Kauri Point Domain at Birkenhead was set apart under the Public Works Act for defence purposes during the year.

The reservation for domain purposes was cancelled over the following areas during the period under review:—

- (a) Part of the Oruawharo Domain, comprising 43 acres 3 roods 8 perches. In this case the domain was too large for the requirements of the district, and the reservation over the area mentioned was revoked so that the land can be disposed of for settlement. A small portion of the domain has been retained under reservation.
- (b) Part of the Patumahoe Domain, comprising 22 acres 0 roods 20 perches. The domain consisted of a small sports area in the township, and an outlying area of some 22 acres. The residents of the district wish to obtain a further playing-field within easy reach of the township, and it is proposed to sell the 22 acres and to devote the proceeds to the purchase of a suitable area.

- (c) The Tangihua Domain of 65 acres. In 1932 this area was leased to the Minister of Employment under the Small Farms Act for a period of five years with a right of renewal for a further term of five years. In 1934 the Domain Board resigned in order to further the objects of the small farms plan, and finally it has been decided that no good purpose would be served by retaining the domain reservation.
- (d) The Atuaroa Domain of 26 acres 3 roods 30·75 perches, near Te Puke. This domain was set aside in 1932. The Domain Board (the Te Puke Town Board) represented that the domain should be sold and a freehold area near the railway-station purchased as a sports-ground. Reports indicated that the freehold area is admirably adapted for playing purposes, and that the Atuaroa area would be an expensive one to develop as a sports-ground. As, however, the latter area was made a domain at the express wish of the local body the Town Board was asked whether the question of the gradual development of the land as a beauty spot and general pleasure-ground had received full consideration, and whether it could find the additional funds which would be necessary to purchase the freehold area. The Board's reply was that it could not finance the development of the Atuaroa area purely as a pleasure-ground; that, in any case, it would have to arrange for the acquisition and development of a sports-ground; and that it could find the additional funds necessary for the purchase of the freehold area. The reservation over the domain was therefore revoked, and the land will be disposed of in due course to the best advantage.
- (e) The Huiakama Domain of 6 acres 2 roods 32 perches. This area was set apart in 1909, but has never been used as a domain. It has been leased by the Department for grazing purposes for many years, but a surrender of the lease is being accepted in order that the land may be offered for sale for cash under the Land Act.

The appointment of the Waitaha Domain Board was revoked owing to the lack of interest on the part of the local people in the reserve, and the area is now under the control of the Department.

Orders in Council were issued appointing sixty Domain Boards to control domains for further terms, while eighty-three vacancies on various Boards were filled by the appointment of suitable persons nominated by the residents of the various districts concerned.

Additional members were appointed to the Kimbolton, Makaka, Seddonville Soldiers' Memorial Park, Pahi, Leithfield, and Waimana Domain Boards.

Other documents issued included warrants authorizing the erection of public halls on the Ataahua and Laingholm Domains.

Permission was also granted in sixteen cases for Domain Boards to increase the charges for admission to their domains on special occasions during the year. Two sets of by-laws were approved, and approval given in six cases to the setting-aside of camping-sites and parking-places in domains.

Under the provisions of section 13 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1932, rental concessions were granted in fifteen cases during the year.

The Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1935, dealt with several matters affecting public domains and requiring special legislation.

The reservation over 1 rood 12·36 perches of the Devonport Domain was cancelled, and the land vested in the Auckland Harbour Board as a site for a signal-station. Provision was made that in the event of the site failing to be used at any time as a signal-station the land shall revert in the Crown for the purposes of a public domain.

Under the Huirangi Domain and Huirangi Institute Empowering Act, 1903, the Huirangi Domain Board controlled a hall situated on Section 80, Huirangi Township. The hall property was vested in the Board by the Act, and the Board was also empowered to deal with all revenue derived from the domain and the hall as a joint fund. The title, however, still stood in the names of the original trustees of the Huirangi Institute. The position that funds derived from the domain could be spent on land the title to which was held by private trustees was not considered satisfactory, and it was therefore decided to vest Section 80 in the Crown as part of the Huirangi Domain. The legislation made the necessary provision, and also repealed the 1903 Act.

The reservation over the Buller Domain of 200 acres near Westport was cancelled, and the area, which is a typical piece of pakihi country, is being developed for the purposes of the Small Farms (Relief of Unemployment) Act, 1932-33.

Provision was made for the exchange of portion of the Coes Ford Domain on the Selwyn River, together with some areas of Crown land, for an area of private land to be added to the domain. The necessity for the exchange arose through the Selwyn changing its course and thereby severing freehold property. To straighten up the boundaries and give the domain the use of the severed area and the present river channel the owner of the

freehold agreed to the exchange, which will be of advantage to himself and in the best interests of the domain.

Certain payments made by the Christchurch Domain Board in connection with a display of plants and flowers at the National Show in Dunedin, and to cover the expenses of an officer of the Board incurred in attending the annual conference of Superintendents and Curators of Public Parks and Gardens held at Dunedin at the time of the show, were validated, as there was no statutory authority for such payments. In the circumstances it was considered desirable that the Board's action should be validated.

Authority was provided for the application of moneys received in respect of the Onairo Domain for the purposes of the Pukemiro and Onairo River Scenic Reserves.

PART II.—NATIONAL PARKS.

No new parks were constituted during the year, nor were any extensive additions made to any of the existing parks. An area of 57 acres 2 roods 10 perches near Ohakune was, however, added to the Tongaririo National Park. The area, which is all in heavy bush, lay between two existing portions of the Park, and its inclusion in the national reserve was very desirable. A fire-break has been formed on the eastern boundary to safeguard the bush.

The goat menace in the Egmont National Park was thoroughly investigated by Captain Yerex, of the Internal Affairs Department, who submitted a valuable and informative report on the whole matter. Following on this report a grant of £500 was made to the Park Board to enable goat-destruction operations to be undertaken, and satisfactory results are anticipated.

The new road through the Eglinton and the Upper Hollyford Valleys again attracted large numbers of visitors, and the various camping-grounds were well patronized. The Department maintained a motor-cycle patrol throughout the season.

Extracts from the annual reports of the Tongariro and Arthur Pass National Park Boards are appended hereto. The financial position of all the Park Boards is most unsatisfactory, and some way of providing sufficient funds must be found. The Department is hopeful that the great value to the Dominion of these national reserves will be recognized by a much more generous allocation of State funds in the future.

APPENDIX.

REPORTS OF NATIONAL PARK BOARDS.

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. ROBERTSON, Under-Secretary for Lands, Chairman.)

Meetings of the Wellington Executive of the Board were held on 12th April and 20th December, 1935, and 1st February, 1936, to deal with the business of the Board, and it was not found necessary to call a full meeting of members.

RUAPEHU SKI CLUB'S HUT.

This matter was further considered at a meeting of the Wellington Executive on the 12th April, 1935, Mr. Marchant and Mr. Blyth being also present. It was decided—subject to the approval of the Board—that permission be granted to the Ruapehu Ski Club to either extend the present Glacier Hut or to build a separate hut on a site in the vicinity, the sleeping-accommodation in such hut not to exceed twelve bunks. A special sub-committee was set up to approve of plans and determine the location of the site. Board members subsequently confirmed the recommendations of the Wellington Executive, and after approval of the plans of the new hut and the location of the site by the sub-committee permission was granted to enable the club to proceed. At the close of the year the exterior of the hut was practically completed.

RESERVOIRS AT ERUA.

Permission has been granted by the Board to the Wanganui Sash and Door Factory and Timber Co., Ltd., to construct two reservoirs with pipe-line leading to the company's mill at Erua.

The upper or high-pressure reservoir will be used only in cases of emergency in connection with fires, and is not to be used for general purposes connected with the mill.

TRACKS.

The Manager at the Chateau (Mr. L. J. Bayfield) advises that during the year attention has been given to the various tracks, huts, &c., and the usual route to the top of Ruapehu is now better poled than it has ever been, and the same remark applies to the track to Ketetahi Springs. It is hoped that extension and repair of the Scoria Flat road will be undertaken after the present winter season.

WHAKAPAPA GORGE.

This gorge, although not situated within the boundaries of the Tongariro Park, is nevertheless included in State lands reserved partly for defence purposes and partly for forestry purposes.

Following on representations by His Worship the Mayor of Auckland (Mr. E. Davis) arrangements were made with the State Forest Service and the Defence Department to conserve the forest growth and natural scenic features at this spot.

DEER.

The officer in charge of the Waikune Prison reports that Warder Carson and Warder Vincent shot 81 deer, 1 sow and litter, under permits issued by the Board.

WINTER SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS TO THE PARK.

The Manager at the Chateau reports that the winter sports held during the period under review were more popular than ever, and the accommodation at the Chateau and in the various huts was fully taxed. This year the New Zealand Championships are to be held at the Park, and also for the first time a team of Australian skiers is to be present. The inter-colonial contests will take place immediately after the championships are completed.

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 Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.).—"The past year has been an active and successful one for the club. The Winter Sports Party made the usual visit at the end of August and approximately seventy members took part. The reduction in numbers was due to the Dominion Championships being held at Mt. Cook this year.

"Snow conditions were the best obtaining for some years, and the usual club ski sports were held, although somewhat delayed by inclement weather and poor visibility.

"During the year work was commenced on the new glacier hut, which is now approaching completion. With this purpose in view working parties were on the mountain on every holiday and many week-ends from the winter onwards transporting materials, building foundations, and preparing the site. Tractor transport was made use of as far as possible, but, although a good track was formed by club members from the end of the Scoria Flat road to the site, snow and weather conditions often made any transport other than man-power impracticable. On the last half-mile, of course, the use of any form of vehicle was out of the question. As a result of this most of the material had to be man-handled up the mountain. Incidentally, the tractor track mentioned above has proved of considerable value to people visiting the mountain.

"The weather during many of these working parties can only be described as execrable, and culminated in the storm of February, when much of the roofing-iron stacked on the site was blown away and lost.

"During the Christmas and Easter holidays fairly large club parties were on the mountain, and good summer skiing was obtained on the Whakapapa Glacier and the Coll.

"Numerous ascents of the various summits of Ruapehu were made and also visits to Tongariro and Ngauruhoe.

"Trips were made to the Wairere Valley, the upper Whakapapa-iti, and the Maungaturatara.

"At Easter and other periods small private parties of club members worked the northern and eastern portions of the Park from the Waihoheho and Maungatepopo huts."

The Tararua Tramping Club (Inc.).—"During the year only one official trip to the National Park area was made by members of the Tararua Tramping Club. This trip was for ten days—23rd August, 1935, to 1st September, 1935, inclusive. The total strength of the party was fifty-six, comprising thirty-six members of the Tararua Tramping Club, the remainder being members of other tramping clubs in the Wellington District—namely, Ruahine, Manawatu, Wairarapa, Hutt Valley, and Victoria University College Tramping Clubs.

"The snow during the ten days was deeper than it has been for some years, and, except for two days when there was a very glassy surface on the snow, conditions for skiing were good.

"The weather conditions on four days were perfect, the remaining being dull and overcast, with mist at times, but not bad enough to make a complete cessation of skiing activities necessary. On this occasion it was possible to ski from the Salt Hut to the Chateau. In addition to skiing, members of the party visited all the places of interest in the vicinity of the Chateau.

"No other official club trip was organized to the Tongariro National Park area, but various members of the Tararua Tramping Club have enjoyed various periods during the year in that locality."

The Alpine Sports Club (Inc.).—"The club's usual Winter Sports Party visited the Chateau during the middle of August for a week's skiing. The absence of some of the club's best skiers at the New Zealand Championships in the South Island and the bad weather of the latter part of the stay rendered advisable the cancellation of a sports programme. In addition to the main winter party, further smaller parties made skiing and climbing trips during the 3rd June, Labour Day, and Dominion Day week-ends, and during the Christmas vacation, using the accommodation of the Chateau and lodge, and also camping."

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Mr. John Cullen, I.S.O., Warden of the Park, in his annual report remarks as follows:—

"The Park area has been fairly free from scrub and tussock fires during the year, only one outbreak having occurred just inside the Park boundary at headwaters of Papamanuka Stream. This fire was undoubtedly wilfully started, as there were no workers on the road at the time. However, it did not burn more than a few hundred acres before it was suppressed.

"A much more serious fire was started in the Military Reserve near the Whakapapanui Bridge, and swept over all that area of the reserve bounded on the east by the Tokaanu-Waimarino Road, on the south and west by the Whakapapanui and Whakapapa Rivers, and on the north by the Papamanuka Stream to the Tokaanu Road. Two small plantations, one of larch and the other of *Pinus insignis*, which were planted by the Prisons Department about twenty years ago, were completely destroyed, and the block of native bush running down the centre of the area was considerably damaged all round its outside. As this fire started alongside the bridge there can be little doubt that it was wilfully started.

"The Haunted Whare has been damaged by having its solitary window broken out, leaving nothing but the bare frame, and the six rustic bunks pulled out and used as firewood by persons who stop over, with their cars, to boil the billy. As the open window space leaves the interior of the building open to all weathers, I suggest that a couple of sheets of iron be procured and nailed over the opening. The iron chimney in the building is sagging down, and needs repairing to make it safe.

"The suspension bridge over the Whakapapanui just below the Haunted Whare, which the Board had erected about ten years ago, was badly damaged by the abnormal flood which occurred about three years ago as the result of a cloudburst on Ruapehu. A large number of trees were brought down by this flood, and in passing under the bridge displaced a portion of the decking and loosened the rest. Since then the remainder of the decking has now disappeared, leaving only the top and bottom wire ropes suspended across the river. I have been informed that foolhardy young trampers make a practice of crossing the river by walking on the lower rope and hanging on to the top one—a most dangerous thing to do as the bridge is about 16 ft. above the boulder-strewn bed of the river, and if a person fell from the rope when crossing he would have little chance of escaping death as the river current is very swift, and the Tawhai Waterfall is just 50 yards down-stream. I recommend that the decking of the bridge be replaced as early as possible.

"Deer have been more numerous in the Park during last year than for some years past. They come from the Kakaramea and Pihanga Ranges on the north, and from the Kaimanawas on the east, the main supply coming from the latter area. They are undoubtedly doing serious damage to young trees and other undergrowth in the native bush, and should be systematically destroyed. On my last visit to the Park I discussed this matter with Mr. Bayfeild, Manager at the Chateau, and were both of opinion that Mr. Bayfeild should be authorized to issue temporary shooting permits to trustworthy guests at the Chateau.

"I have in previous reports deplored the steadily increasing disappearance of native-bird life in the Park attributable to the rapid increase in the number of cats running wild in the bush, and to the presence of stoats and weasels. Cats could be kept in check by laying poisoned fish for them."

ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(J. F. QUINN, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, Chairman.)

I have the honour to submit for consideration and adoption a report on the Board's affairs for the sixth complete year since the Board was constituted. Although the Board is still much restricted in its activities through lack of money, it has been a comparatively busy year, and considering the severe limitations imposed by financial considerations some progress and improvement may be claimed.

Personnel.—The Hon. D. G. Sullivan has relinquished the seat on the Board he held *ex officio* as Mayor of Christchurch. His appointment as a member of the Cabinet has been a matter of gratification to the Board, and its cordial congratulations have been extended to Mr. Sullivan. Mr. J. W. Beanland, having been elected Mayor of Christchurch, now takes the seat vacated by Mr. Sullivan. We felicitate Mr. Beanland on his election, and welcome him as a member of the Board. There has also been a change in the Mayoralty of Greymouth, and Mr. Meldrum as the present holder of this office is *ex officio* a member of the Board. Professor Robert Speight is taking an extended holiday abroad, but he has requested that the Board be informed of his desire to resume his interest in the Board's work on his return.

Meetings.—In accordance with the resolution adopted at its last annual meeting, the Board has met on four occasions, including once at Arthur's Pass, when an inspection was carried out and subsequently discussed. In addition, the Chairman, Dr. William McKay, and Mr. Darby met at Arthur's Pass to inspect various works undertaken by the unemployed camp.

Finance.—The position can be succinctly stated by saying that the Board can carry on for another year on its present overhead and with essential maintenance, &c. Any plans for undertaking any works can be put aside unless a grant is made by Government or funds raised from some source. Representations were renewed last year to the Government, but nothing materialized. On the appointment of the present Government the officers of the Board interviewed the Hon. D. G. Sullivan, and were assured of his co-operation. The plain facts are that if the Board is to exercise its proper functions it must have money. To secure funds and to obviate a hiatus in its activities it must move strongly in the matter immediately. A formal application on behalf of the Board has been made for special consideration of our claims when the estimates are being compiled.

Sports.—Another unfavourable season was experienced for winter sports, there being a repetition of the poor snow conditions that have been experienced for several seasons.

The Railway excursions were fewer in number than usual, and less than a thousand people patronized them. Nevertheless, the Christchurch Ski Club, whose activities are centred within the Park, appears to be in a robust state, and is at present engaged in making substantial additions to the Club's hut, to provide special accommodation for ladies. The Canterbury Mountaineering and Tramping Club continues to make commendable progress, and seems to be using the Park to an even greater extent.

The club has nearly completed a cottage at the Pass for the accommodation of its members. The toboggan run constructed by the Board at the beginning of the season had very little use, but it exceeded expectations as a "run."

Township.—A recent inspection disclosed a heartening improvement in the order and appearance of cottages and grounds. It is gratifying that lessees have responded to the Board's lead in improving the appearance of the place. Rents have come in very satisfactorily indeed. There have been more inquiries in the last month or so for allotments than for several years. It appears that from that aspect the Board will share in the returning prosperity of the Dominion. There is still a persistent desire for building lots in the main township, where there is only one lot of an unattractive nature remaining. There are, however, ample sites left in the other subdivisions. Several permits have been issued for additions and alterations and one permit for a new building. A provisional business license has also been granted.

Deer.—The issue of permits has been more than double the number of any previous year. One outcome has been the discouragement of the deer pest in the more accessible regions of the Park. As licensees more often than not omit to return a tally of the results of their expedition, it is impossible to give any figures. Nevertheless, it can be taken as a careful and conservative statement that there is a decided increase in numbers of deer in the Park, and that the pest is doing such damage to vegetation as is sufficient to give rise to public concern. It is understood that Government parties are gradually working northward on a systematic plan, but that at the present rate of progress their advent to the Park is not imminent.

Unemployment Camp.—This ran a period of nineteen weeks in the autumn and in the spring. While the camp entailed considerable administrative work and was not free from labour difficulties, it did useful work. Prolonged bad weather was the most detrimental feature both to the progress of the work and the discipline of the men. The net cost of the camp was £82 11s., which sum was well within the allotment approved by the Board. The work accomplished is reported on elsewhere.

Thanks are extended to Messrs. Carroll (Stationmaster) and Brannigan for work done and promised in maintaining the Station rock gardens; to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Scott for gratuitous services in clearing tracks; to our honorary rangers for their help during the year; to the public press for much valuable publicity and encouragement; to the Railways Department and its officers for many courtesies extended in connection with the unemployed camp; to Dr. William McKay (Chairman) and Mr. S. C. A. Darby (member) of the Grounds Committee for consistent effort in the Board's behalf, in which they have directed the bulk of the work carried out.

General.—Steady progress is being made with the Waimakariri Bridge. Its completion ought to result in very much greater use of the Park. No serious accident marred the

enjoyment of the Park this year. The Railways Department are proceeding with the construction of a combined tennis-court and skating-rink, and have called for the Board's subsidy of £25. The Dobson Memorial has not been heard of recently. The handbook on the Park, edited and published by Mr. R. S. Odell, has proved an attractive and well-turned-out publication. Petty vandalism continues, and puts the Board to the expense of renewing track signs. The work of widening and improving the road between the Pass and the new bridge is proceeding apace under the aegis of the Public Works Department. The Board's application to have the Lake Kaurapataka region brought within its jurisdiction has not yet been acceded to.

The Ranger has submitted his annual report, which is available to the Board. His recommendations include: That the road through the township should be tar-sealed; that a motor speed limit should be fixed for the township; that Section 53A be withdrawn from among available building-sites and reserved for access purposes; that tobogganing at Daisy Flat should be prohibited.

The following report is submitted by Dr. William McKay as Chairman of the Grounds Committee:—

The lack of funds at the disposal of the Board has made it inadvisable to recommend new works involving any great expenditure. The Grounds Committee has concentrated chiefly upon the cleaning-up and improvement of the township, and has co-operated in the scheme of tree and shrub planting and the construction of rockery plots at the railway-station.

Township Planning.—Your Committee during the year drew up a scheme of proposed regulations relating to lay-out, improvements, and general management of the township. Such of these proposals as were approved by the Board have been put into operation, so that already considerable improvement in the appearance of the place has resulted. Residents have shown a commendable willingness to assist the Board in these matters.

Horticultural.—The Committee co-operated with Mr. M. J. Barnett in laying out the rockery plots at the Arthur's Pass Railway-station, and in collecting suitable plant material with which to furnish them. The plantations on the commonage continue to thrive, and will soon much enhance the outlook in the neighbourhood. The Committee wishes to express its appreciation of the keen interest displayed by Mr. Barnett in this work and by his willingness at all times to assist.

Illegal Cutting of Timber.—The action of the Board in dealing with certain offenders has had a most salutary effect in conserving standing forest near the township. Complaints as to the destruction, for firewood, of trees on the Waimakariri Flat were received, but the appointment of Mr. Ritchie, of Public Works Department, as an Honorary Ranger proved very effective in preventing further damage. He is to be commended for his efforts, and it is hoped that the loss caused by his transfer from the district will be remedied by the appointment of another Honorary Ranger.

Highway within Township.—Mr. Trevor-Smith, Public Works Department Engineer, visited the Park in company with members of the Committee in order to inspect and discuss various matters affecting the improvement of the highway. As a result the Department gave instructions for the roadway to be widened to 20 ft. through the township, and a culvert to be put in where water often collects. This work and a levelling of the road margins is already giving a more pleasing appearance to the surroundings. The Grounds Committee again wish to thank Mr. Trevor-Smith for his help and kindly advice throughout the year.

Other Portions of Highway.—A first-class new ferro-concrete bridge over Kelly's Creek has been completed, while the new structure over McGrath's Creek is proving a great boon. The road through Otira Gorge has never been in better order, a fact well appreciated by the motoring public, as six hundred cars went over it in the space of two months during the summer. These figures will be greatly increased when the new bridge over the Waimakariri is finished.

Old Buildings, &c.—The last of the unsightly tin sheds on the Railway Reserve which were purchased by the Board have been demolished. Several advertising signs of a glaring nature, which were placed too near the roadway, have been removed.

Wandering Stock.—These have again been a source of trouble near the township. If measures already taken do not prove effective, it may be necessary to erect a cattle-stop near Halpins Creek, at an estimated cost of about £20.

Tracks.—These are in very good order, and so far have given little trouble to maintain. Our Honorary Ranger, Mr. W. Fraser, of Otira, has recently been over those on the western side of the range and reports favourably on them.

Depredations by Animals.—Recent reports by honorary rangers and other experienced mountaineers confirm the statements made last September to the effect that most extensive damage is being done by deer in the Mingha and Edward Valleys. The forest on every hand shows signs of denudation of the bark of trees, while the seedlings and the forest floor are being damaged or actually destroyed. Chamois are still seen in herds numbering sometimes up to as many as fifteen, in spite of the fact that many are shot both by visiting and resident sportsmen.

Resident Ranger.—The Committee wishes to record appreciation of the efforts of our Ranger, Mr. C. E. Warden, whose advice and assistance are always at the disposal of visitors. In addition to his ordinary duties he has carried out useful work in the way of designing and erecting warning and guiding sign-posts where required.

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