

1886.
NEW ZEALAND.

BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD, 1885-86

(SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE).

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

THE Board held meetings on the 18th August, 1885, and on the 8th February, 1886.

The expenditure during the past year has been £239 1s. 2d., as against £322 4s. 6d. for the previous year.

The ordinary expense for labour for keeping the grounds in order has been at the rate of about £15 per month, the balance of £50 having been for repairs of fencing, for refitting the cottages occupied by the Keeper and the police officer who acts as Ranger, and for extra work. This reduction in the labour account has been rendered necessary owing to the fact that the Board has not received the usual contribution to its funds from Government for the period just expired, the revenue being entirely dependent on the small amount of £183 16s. 8d. received from the City Council as one-sixth of the annual rents from the Wellington City Town Belt Reserves.

It is necessary to point out that the fences enclosing the gardens, which have been erected for eighteen years, are now in a very insecure condition, and in order to put them in even temporary repair it will be necessary to incur an expenditure of at least £25.

Underbrushing has been carried on in the most frequented parts of the grounds, but in a large portion of the domain this important work could not, owing to the want of labour, be overtaken, and the growth of the underbrush and gorse has increased to such an extent as to cause considerable damage to the young trees and great danger in the summer months from fire. A thorough clearing of this undergrowth is a work that is most urgently required, but unless additional funds are obtained it cannot be undertaken for the present.

Much extra expense has also been thrown on the Board by changes which have been made in the frontage-line to the Tinakori Road, and by the cutting and embankments at Glenbervie Terrace, as new paths and fences are thereby rendered necessary.

For the first six months of the year only two labourers could be afforded, and at present there is only one man employed besides the Keeper.

Owing to the withdrawal of the Government grant, hitherto placed at the disposal of the Board for this purpose, the work in the nursery-ground has been suspended, and the Board has been obliged to refuse all applications for the supply of young trees for planting Government reserves and for sale at a moderate charge to private persons. This is very much to be regretted, as in past years the practical assistance which the Board has been able, at a small expense, to afford towards the extension of forest-planting has been of material service to the colony.

The large plot of ground near the front entrance is now in thorough order and ready to be marked out into sections for specimen plants and for experimental purposes.

The entrance-roads have been newly metalled, and the various buildings in the domain have been put in a fair state of repair.