

1948
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, 30th June, 1948.

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, 1948.

I have, &c.,

D. M. GREIG,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

REPORT

PART I.—PUBLIC DOMAINS

PUBLIC interest and enthusiasm in the development and improvement of existing public domains and in the acquisition of further areas for recreational purposes has been maintained at a high level throughout the past year. A pleasing feature has been the willingness of residents in many localities to assist in raising funds for domain improvements, and organizing labour on a voluntary basis.

A perusal of the annual reports furnished by the controlling Boards shows that in the great majority of cases the public domains of the Dominion are fulfilling the purposes for which they were set apart. A splendid public spirit has been shown by members of the various Boards in carrying out the administration of areas placed under their care. The services of Board members are given gratuitously, and in many cases the amount of work and time involved is considerable. The Department fully appreciates the service rendered to the community by Domain Boards, and is willing at all times to co-operate with them in any matter which will make for improved administration of domains in the best interests of the general public.

Assisted in many cases by volunteer labour, Domain Boards are now commencing to overtake arrears of maintenance and development work which was suspended during the war years.

During recent years there has been a considerable increase in the funds made available by Parliament for the administration and improvement of domain lands. However, owing to shortage of labour and difficulty in securing supplies of essential materials, it has not been possible to proceed with all schemes and projects for which Government assistance has been made available.

Attention was drawn in last year's report to the increasing use of domain lands for camping purposes. It is pleasing to record that Domain Boards in general are fully alive to the necessity and desirability of fostering and meeting present-day demands for modernized camping-grounds. Shortages of essential materials have prevented some camping-ground schemes being fully implemented, but in several instances Domain Boards, by the exercise of considerable ingenuity and resource, have been able to effect extensions to and modernizations of camping facilities within the limits of available materials.

Legislation was passed last session as section 20 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1947, authorizing Boards in control of domains of not less than 10 acres to appropriate and use, with the prior consent of the Minister of Lands, any part of the domain as a site for a caretaker's residence. Experience has shown that on many of our larger domains it is desirable and necessary for a caretaker to reside within the precincts of the domain, so as to be in a position to render more efficient service to the public, protect the property under his care, and prevent vandalism.

Numerous leasing proposals were submitted by Domain Boards during the year. These were fully investigated before approval was given to the issue of leases. Domain Boards generally appreciate the advantage of being able to ask for advice and assistance in this important phase of administration of domain lands.

As at 31st March, 1948, the total number of public domains administered under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, was 827, covering a total area of 80,084 acres. Forty-six of these domains are controlled by various Commissioners of Crown Lands, 302 are administered by local authorities acting as Domain Boards, and the remaining 479 are under the control of local Boards.

Eleven new domains, with a total area of 78 acres, were reserved and brought under Part II of the Act during the year. Additions totalling 103 acres were also made to fourteen existing Domains.

Brief mention may be made of the new domains constituted during the year, as follows:—

The Glenbrook Beach Domain, area $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, is situated at Glenbrook, on the Manukau Harbour, 36 miles south-west of Auckland. This reserve will provide a recreation area for the large number of visitors to the seaside in that locality.

The Whangamata Domain, containing an area of 17 acres, is on the east coast of the Coromandel Peninsula, some 21 miles north of Waibi. This reserve is used for camping, picnics, and general recreation.

The Onepu Domain, of $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres, is near Te Teko, some 17 miles south from Whakatane. It comprises flat land, centrally situated, and will be used for general recreation purposes by the people of the district.

The Okauia Domain is about 10 miles east of Matamata, and comprises 4 acres of land suitable for general recreation.

The Belmont Domain, of 29 acres, is at Belmont, 11 miles north of Wellington. It was purchased from the Speedy Estate and is to be developed for general recreation. Portion of the purchase-price for this area was found by the Hutt County Council. The reserve will form a welcome addition to the existing recreation areas in this rapidly-expanding locality. Efforts by local residents to improve the area are already under way.

The Hawtrey Domain, situated at Johnsonville, is a little less than half an acre, and is being improved as a playing-area by the local body.

The Poplars Domain at Tadmor, 42 miles south-west of Nelson, was donated by the local people. Tennis-courts are to be laid down on this domain, which is only a small area of 1 rood 12 perches.

The Stanley Brook Memorial Domain, situated some 40 miles south from Nelson, comprises $\frac{1}{4}$ acre, and was formerly part of a school-site. The school building on the area is now being used as a public hall, for which purpose it was purchased by the residents of the district.

The Mead Domain, of 2 acres, is a general recreation area in Mead Settlement, about 20 miles north of Ashburton. This area is being improved as a memorial ground.

The Karoro Domain, situated 2 miles from Greymouth and containing $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres, will provide a necessary recreation area for the people of the district, and has already been partially developed for that purpose.

The Mossburn War Memorial Park Domain is situated in Mossburn Township, 62 miles north-west from Invercargill. The area is to be used for general recreation purposes and as a site for a community centre, for which purpose special legislative authority was provided in section 5 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1947.

Additions to existing domains were made as follows :—

Land District.				Domain.		Area added.		
						A.	R.	P.
North Auckland	..	..	..	Beachlands	..	14	0	0
				Korareka	..	1	1	13·98
				Okaihau	..	7	0	14·4
				Pakuranga	..	3	2	18
Auckland	..	..	..	Rotorua	..	44	3	26
				Waiomio	..	0	3	39·98
Taranaki	..	..	..	Pungarehu	..	0	1	29·74
Wellington	..	..	..	Alfredton	..	2	0	30
				Waimeha	..	0	2	3
Nelson	..	..	..	Riverview	..	7	3	0
				Rototiti	..	2	2	0
Marlborough	..	..	..	Ngakuta	..	0	1	5·3
Canterbury	..	..	..	Clayton	..	4	2	3
Westland	..	..	..	Wataroa	..	12	3	8·5
Total area added to fourteen domains				..		102	3	31·90

Action was taken during the year to unite into one public domain the Ohakune, the Ohakune Lakes, and the Rochfort Park Domains, situated in the Borough of Ohakune. These three areas will in future be known as the Ohakune Domain. Similar action was also taken in respect of the Fendalton and Millbrook Domains in Christchurch. These two domains have been united under the name of Fendalton Domain.

The reservation for recreation purposes over portions of the Newmarket and Millerton Domains was cancelled during the year under review. Many years ago the Newmarket Borough Council erected a fire-station and borough depot on some 2 acres of the domain. The Council has paid compensation to the Domain Board for the area concerned, which has now been vested in the Borough Council as a site for municipal buildings. Some $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres of the Millerton Domain, comprising broken, rocky ground, unsuitable for recreation purposes, has been subdivided for building sites. Portions of the area have been leased for many years past, and in some cases buildings have been erected. In view of the fact that the leases were due to expire it was considered desirable to take the area out of the domain so that future leasing proposals could be dealt with under the provisions of the Land Act, 1924.

PART II.—NATIONAL PARKS

No development work of an extensive nature has been undertaken on national parks during the year, but reports received from the various controlling authorities indicate that, in spite of difficulties in securing adequate supplies of materials and labour satisfactory progress has been made in the work of maintaining and improving national parks.

Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to proceed with the erection of a ranger's residence on Tongariro National Park. Until accommodation is provided it will be necessary to postpone the appointment of a permanent ranger for this park. Further repairs to tracks on the park were effected during the year, and deer-culling is still being undertaken by the Wildlife Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs.

Legislative authority was obtained last session to the reservation as primary-education endowment being cancelled over an area of some 211 acres and to the addition of this land to the Egmont National Park. The area in question is situated near Warea, about 22 miles from New Plymouth, and is adjacent to the Egmont National Park, being separated from it by Forest Road. It contains valuable native bush of excellent scenic value. The addition of the area to the park will enable it to be administered in the best interests of the public. In addition to the usual Government subsidy of pound for pound on local-body contributions to the Board's funds, the Egmont National Park Board was granted £2,000 for repairs and additions to buildings. Good progress is being made by the Park Board in the destruction of opossums, goats, and other pests, which, unless held in check, present a real menace to forest growth. The Department is indebted to Mr. G. G. Atkinson, Head Ranger to the Park Board, for an excellent report dealing with the preservation of flora and fauna in the park.

Negotiations are in train for the purchase from J. S. Cameron of 2,085 acres at Totaranui. This area, which contains some very fine bush, will form a valuable addition to the Abel Tasman National Park.

It has been necessary to appoint a new ranger at Arthur Pass National Park, owing to the death of the previous holder of this office. The Board is continuing park improvements, particularly at Arthur Pass Township. Following on the completion of additional road-formation, it will be possible to offer further sections in the township for lease during the ensuing year.

During the year the Fiordland National Park was threatened by the outbreak of fire in certain areas, but serious damage was averted. The vigilance of the public in detecting and reporting these fires, and assisting fire-fighting services to quell outbreaks, is very much appreciated.

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