

1927.
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, 30th June, 1927.

I have the honour to report on the public domains of the Dominion for the year ended 31st March, 1927.

Eighteen new domains, totalling 159 acres, were brought under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, 1908, during the year. Boards have been appointed to control sixteen of the new areas, and appointments will be made in due course for the other two. Additions totalling some 72 acres were also made to fifteen existing domains. The total number of domains administered under Part II of the Act is now 678, comprising a total area of approximately 69,000 acres. The various Commissioners of Crown Lands administer forty-seven of these domains, 238 are controlled by local authorities, acting as Domain Boards, while the remainder are under the care of local Boards appointed from time to time.

Various domain matters requiring special legislation were dealt with in the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1926.

The Tupua Domain was found to be unsuitable for recreation purposes on account of its being a long narrow area, intersected by a swampy creek. The reservation over the land was accordingly cancelled, and arrangements are now in hand for the purchase of a more suitable area in its place.

Authority was granted for the vesting in the Newmarket Borough Council, as a site for municipal buildings, of an area of 2 roods 13·6 perches of the Newmarket Domain. The Council has erected a fire-station and borough depot on this area, and on another portion of the domain has converted into a cottage a small building originally erected for domain purposes. Provision is made for the vesting in the Council as a site for municipal buildings of the former area on payment to the Domain Account of a sum to be fixed by the Valuer-General, and for the removal of the cottage to borough property on payment of compensation for the original building.

The reservation over the Waihi Domain, which is situated outside the borough, and which has not been used by the public for many years, was cancelled, and the land declared available for disposal under the Land Act. The proceeds from the sale thereof are to be applied, with the prior approval of the Minister, in the purchase of other land for recreation purposes.

Authority was granted the Paeroa Borough Council, which is also the Paeroa Domain Board, to borrow the sum of £1,000 for expenditure on the domain under its control.

The reservation was cancelled over the Niho Domain, with a view to the land being sold and the proceeds applied towards the purchase of a more suitable area.

Provision was made for the granting of authority for the disposal of timber growing on Reserve E, being portion of the Wanganui River Trust Domain situated near Taumarunui. There is on this reserve a considerable amount of valuable milling-timber (chiefly totara), which the Board wishes to dispose of. The bush is not visible from the road or river, and is therefore not so valuable for scenic purposes as it otherwise might be. The proceeds from the sale of the timber are to be used for the purchase of other land for domain purposes.

The reservation over an area of 6 acres 3 roods 32 perches of recreation reserve at Hanmer was cancelled, and the land declared Crown land subject to the provisions of the Land Act, 1924. Further land at Hanmer was required for subdivision into residential lots, and the area above mentioned was eminently suitable for that purpose, though not particularly adapted for a domain. Arrangements are being made to reserve another and larger area for recreation in its place.

Authority was granted to the Gore Borough Council, which is also the local Domain Board, to exchange portion of the domain known as the Caledonian Ground for a municipal endowment. The Caledonian Ground is to be leased, and all moneys derived therefrom are to be paid into the Domain Account and used in the maintenance and improvement of the domain.

The erection of public halls on the Maitua Island and Scotsburn Domains was authorized during the year by warrants issued under section 4 of the Public Reserves and Domains Amendment Act, 1921-22. Several applications were received, and permission granted for admission charges under section 2 of the Public Reserves and Domains Amendment Act, 1925, and in suitable cases the condition was imposed that a fixed proportion of the gate-money be paid to the Domain Board concerned.

Orders in Council were issued appointing fifty-eight Boards to control domains for further terms. Some seventy-four vacancies on Boards were also filled by the appointment of suitable persons nominated by the residents of the particular districts concerned.

At the request of the controlling Boards the names of the Lake Ellesmere and Te Aroha Bridge Domains were changed to Springston South and Herries Memorial Park respectively.

The Whangamomona and Mahoe Domains, which are situated within a short distance of each other, were, at the request of the residents, amalgamated as one domain under the provisions of section 4 of the Public Reserves and Domains Amendment Act, 1925. The Ngaruawahia and Kirikiriroa Domains were also amalgamated during the year, and placed under the control of the Ngaruawahia Borough Council. Formerly the Kirikiriroa area was controlled by a Board of local residents; but insufficient funds were available to develop the ground for playing purposes. The Borough Council, however, was in a position to carry out improvements, and, as the land has lately been included within the borough boundary, it was considered advisable, at the request of all concerned, to bring the domains under one control.

The Tokomaru Domain was exchanged for an area of private land more suitable for recreation purposes.

Under the provisions of the Peel Forest Act, 1926, the reservation for recreation purposes over the Scotsburn Domain and the appointment of the Domain Board have been cancelled. The domain is now included within the area controlled by the Peel Forest Park Board under the powers conferred by the statute.

Numerous applications have been received for grants and subsidies for the carrying-out of improvements on public domains and for the purchase of new areas for recreation purposes. The funds available, however, have been somewhat restricted, and it has not been possible to afford financial assistance other than in a few deserving cases. Under the conditions prevailing, votes for domain improvements have been restricted as much as possible to country districts, as it is held that boroughs and cities have much greater facilities for providing funds than scantily populated districts. Sympathetic consideration is always given to the requirements of districts where no reserves have been set aside for public recreation, and where no Crown land is available for reservation subsidies have been granted in some cases to assist in the purchase of private land. The very reasonable conditions are imposed that a fair proportion of the purchase-money must be found by the local people concerned, and that any land acquired must be transferred to the Crown as a recreation reserve with a view to its being brought under the provisions of the Public Reserves and Domains Act as a public domain.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

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