

1928.

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.

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 31st July, 1928.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report on the public domains of the Dominion for the year ended 31st March, 1928.

Thirteen new domains, totalling 105 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 eleven of the new areas, and appointments will be made in due course for the other two. Additions totalling some 80 acres were also made to sixteen existing domains. The total number of domains administered under Part II of the Act is now 691, comprising a total area of approximately 69,000 acres. The various Commissioners of Crown Lands administer forty-six of these domains, 246 are controlled by local authorities acting as Domain Boards, while the remainder are under the care of local Boards appointed from time to time.

As usual, a number of matters affecting public domains were dealt with in the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act.

The reservation over the Mahurangi Domain, which was not used for recreation purposes, and which had been leased from time to time, 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 Mount Albert Borough Council, which is also the Mount Albert Domain Board, to raise a special loan, subject to a poll of ratepayers, of a sum not exceeding £25,000, the proceeds of such loan to be applied in improving the domain.

The reservation over portion of the Massey Park Domain, being a small triangular area of 1 acre 3 roods which proved unsuitable for recreation purposes, was cancelled, with a view to the land being sold and the proceeds applied towards the purchase of a more suitable area.

Portion of the Mount Wellington Domain, containing an area of 1 rood 34.9 perches, was exchanged for an area of 1 acre 1 rood 1 perch of an adjacent quarry reserve. The quarry adjoins the domain, and in order that it may be worked to the best advantage it was found necessary that a small portion of the domain should be added to the quarry. In exchange an unused portion of the quarry reserve was added to the domain. A distinct advantage of the exchange is that the domain obtains additional access from a public road.

The reservation over the Pakiri Domain, which had proved unsuitable for recreation purposes, was cancelled, and the land declared available for disposal under the Land Act. An area of 5 acres, which was acquired some years ago by the Pakiri residents, and held in trust for the purpose of a public recreation-ground for the district, has been vested in the Crown as a recreation reserve, the local residents agreeing to this. A local Domain Board is now being appointed to control the new domain. The proceeds from the sale of the old domain are to be applied towards the maintenance and improvement of the new area.

Authority was granted for the cancellation of the reservation over the Ormond Domain. The land is not considered suitable for recreation purposes, and another area in the district is being acquired as a public domain.

Authority was granted the Carnival Park Domain Board to apply portion of its funds towards the improvement of roads and footpaths giving access to the domain.

The reservation over the Turakina Domain, which proved to be unsuitable for recreation purposes, 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.

Provision was made for the constitution as a public domain under the control of the Greymouth Borough Council of Reserve 94 and part Reserve 95, Town of Greymouth. The management of these areas as recreation-ground reserves was vested in the Council pursuant to the provisions of the Westland Waste Lands Act, 1870. Certain portions of streets adjoining had for many years been used as part of the recreation-grounds, and in addition a freehold section vested in the Council had also been so used. In accordance with the wishes of the local authority the legislation provided authority for the revocation of the existing vesting of the management of Reserve 94 and part Reserve 95 under the Act of 1870, and for the constitution of the land comprised therein as a public domain subject to the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, 1908, under the control of the Borough Council acting as a Domain Board. The Council was authorized to raise, subject to the consent of the ratepayers, a special loan not exceeding £5,000 for the improvement of the domain and of any land that might be added thereto; and in addition was empowered to transfer to the Crown the freehold section above referred to with a view to the same being added to the domain. The portions of streets which had been used for recreation are to be closed under the provisions of section 12 of the Land Act, 1924, and also added to the domain.

The reservation over the Ranfurly Park Domain, which has not been used for recreation for some years past, there being a further domain in the town known as the Ranfurly Domain, was cancelled and the land declared available for disposal under the Land Act. Portion of the area is being withheld from disposal as a map reserve, and is being retained to provide for an addition, if necessary, to the present Ranfurly Domain.

Orders in Council were issued appointing fifty-seven Boards to control domains for further terms. Over seventy vacancies on some fifty-seven 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 in connection with appointments, applications for subsidies, leasing of domain areas, general inquiries on matters of administration, charges for admission, &c.

Portion of the Tiniroto Domain was exchanged for an area of private land more suitable for recreation purposes.

Three Proclamations were issued under subsection (9) of section 12 of the Land Act, 1924, adding certain pieces of closed roads and portions of closed streets to the Mount Somers, Hyde, and Greymouth Domains respectively.

A consolidation and revision of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, 1908, and its amendments has been prepared during the year. It is hoped to considerably improve the statutory provisions dealing with public domains, both by amendment to the existing law and by the addition of some entirely new provisions which experience has shown to be necessary in order to adequately meet present-day requirements.

The policy of the Department has always been to make ample provision for recreation reserves when land is being subdivided, and the result of this policy may be seen in the many splendid domains that exist throughout the country. Ample powers are conferred under the Land Act, 1924, for the reservation of areas of Crown lands for the use and recreation of the general public, and in the great majority of cases these areas after reservation are created public domains and placed under the control of local authorities or special Boards constituted pursuant to Part II of the Act. It should be added that a commendable public spirit is shown by the members of the various controlling Boards in carrying out the administration of our public domains. Their services are given gratuitously, and in many cases the amount of time and work involved is very considerable indeed.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

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